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*The* GARDEN *of*  
a COMMUTER'S  
WIFE

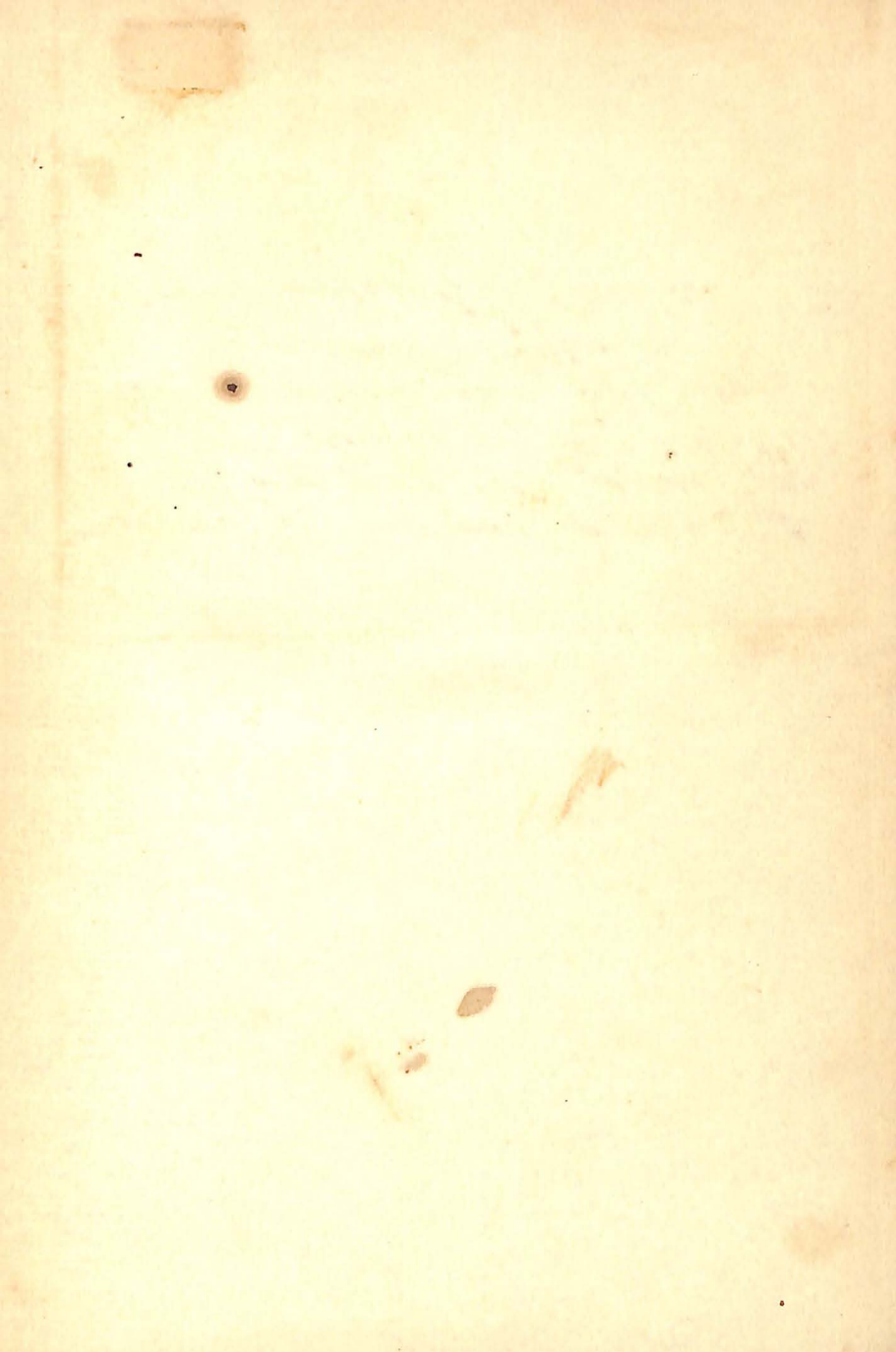


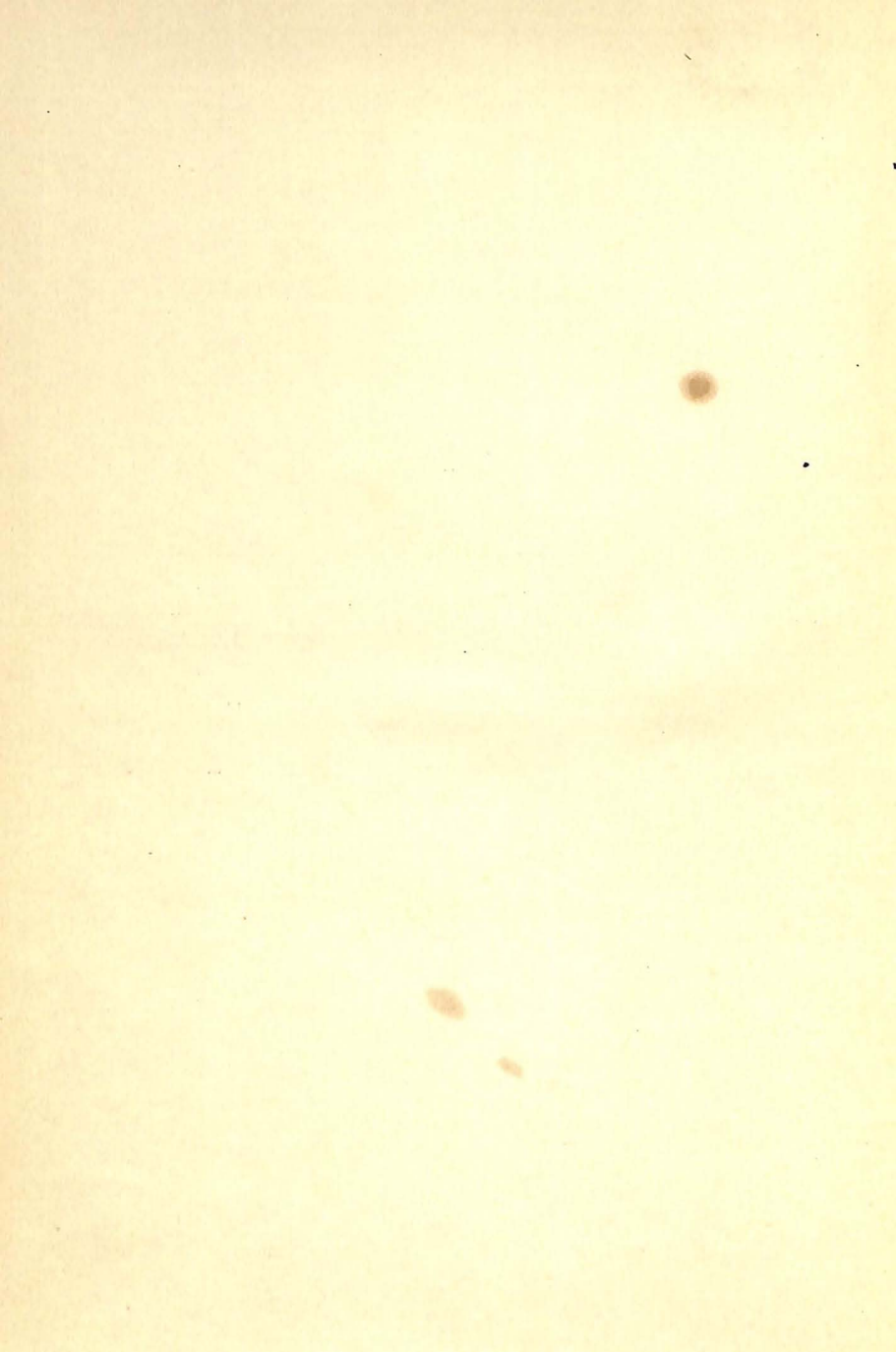
Library of . . .

E. S. NOURSE.

"  
Go make thy garden fair  
as thou canst  
Thou workest never alone,  
Perchance he whose plot  
is next to thine  
Will see it, and amend his own  
"







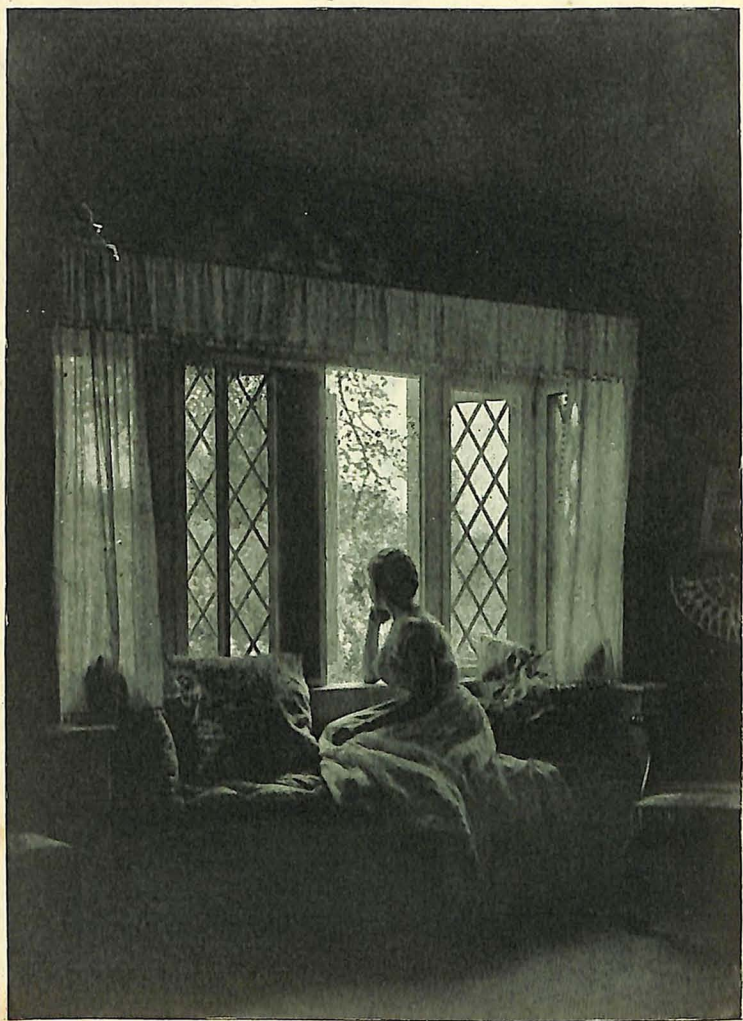


THE GARDEN  
OF A COMMUTER'S WIFE

•The  & Co. •

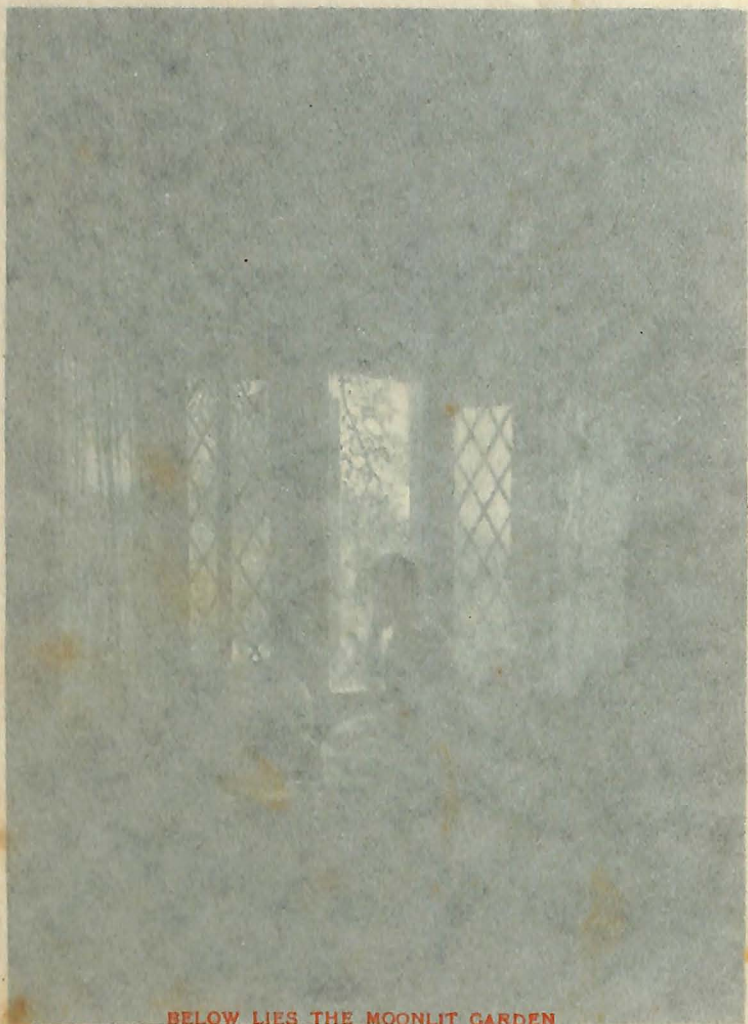








BELOW LIES THE MOONLIT GARDEN



BELOW LIES THE MOONLIT GARDEN



THE GARDEN  
OF A COMMUTER'S WIFE

RECORDED BY  
THE GARDENER

*WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS IN PHOTOGRAVURE*

New York  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.  
1902

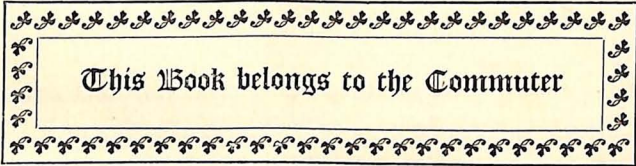
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# The Garden of a Commuter's Wife

## I

### THE RETURN

*October 23* (Battle of Leipsic, 1642, according to the Farmers' Almanac. I never could understand the relationship between the astronomy, history, and literature in this volume). To-day I began the planting of my garden. The combination of date and deed may seem strange to those who do not know; but as gardening is the most exacting as well as the most exciting of outdoor sports, one cannot begin too early in the season, and it is really better to begin the season before. Neither a garden nor a gardener can be made in one year, nor in one generation even. It takes a fine sort of heredity of air and soil and environment for either; also gardening is the most cheerful and satisfactory pursuit for women who love outdoors. Field and forest often hold one at bay.

We may admire, worship, love, but neither advise nor argue with them nor add one cubit to their stature. In a garden one's personality can come forth, stick a finger into Nature's pie, and lend a hand in the making of it, besides furnishing many of the ingredients.

I have been planting crocuses in the grass borders all the morning, stabbing the turf with a pointed spade handle, yclept dibble, and pushing the sturdy little bulbs deep into the wounds. In April there will be a cluster of starry flowers to cover each scar. Fortunately my backbone is largely composed of New England granite, or it would ache. As it is, I am very glad to sit on a great heap of dry leaves under the south wall and write in my garden book while the cart has gone over to the pit by the river to bring back a load of sand for my tulips and hyacinths.

A "Boke of the Garden" is a necessity; otherwise, so kind is memory about disagreeables, one forgets one's mistakes. I am sure that I should have forgotten a very bad one of mine and have planted my bulbs in the long strip in front of the honeysuckle trellis, but for the finding last night, in an old desk, of one of my schoolgirl journals in which garden items and the sentiments of eighteen were impartially mixed. Under April 20, it said: "Never plant bulbs



at the foot of the garden; the water settles and the mice come out of the wall and eat them or they rot. I've only three hyacinths and four tulips left, but then I didn't plant very many. When I marry I'm going to push all the vegetables over the fence into the field and have nothing but flowers here, and I'm going to buy bulbs and roses by the hundred instead of by sixes. . . . Pocket money doesn't go far for plants when I have to buy gloves out of it to wear to that stupid dancing class and have such very warm hands. Aunt Lot promised that I should join, and I couldn't go back on one of the family. But of course when I'm married I shall be too old for that sort of thing, which will be a great economy besides letting me grub in peace. . . . Aunt Lot says that I shall have changed my mind by then."

That was seven years ago, and lo and behold, here I am by the same garden wall, married, but my mind otherwise unchanged, and with bulbs by the hundred, lying in their stout manila bags under the apple tree, waiting to be planted. It seems a lifetime ago, the coming about of it all, yet scarcely longer than the week since our return, so many things have been crowded into it.

To begin with, Bluff knew me! At first I was not sure if the recognition was genuine, for the astute



old setter had won his name in early puppyhood from his self-possession and the calm assurance, unbacked by circumstances, with which he emerged unscathed from fights and other embarrassing situations. The rapid barks that greeted me as I opened the door might have been merely the joy of promised companionship for the October evening; for though the logs on the study hearth were blazing finely and the lamps were lit, the house seemed strangely silent.

I stretched my hands toward the fire instinctively and looked about the familiar room, where the long lines of shelves were never able to hold the flock of books that ran riot over table and mantel-shelf, crowded the inkstand on the desk, and followed their owner to his lounging chair, where they perched on both arms, sometimes forgetting their dignity so far as to fall sprawling to the floor. I looked over my shoulder, expecting every moment to hear footsteps. I was still under the spell of old-world tradition. Bluff drew nearer, trembling with excitement, but the long, ardent sniffs and tail waggings that gradually broke from the usual side-to-side motion into circular sweeps might be merely inquisitive enthusiasm.

Finally I heard a step in the hall and went to meet it. A maid, wholly strange, handed me my

own telegram unopened, saying, "The doctor wasn't looking for you, ma'am, until the eight o'clock train, and he drove over to the hospital a few minutes before this came, saying he'd be back well before seven."

A weight fell upon the buoyant spirits that had hurried me helter skelter from steamer to train, that not a moment might be lost in getting to home and father—perhaps I should say father and home; but I think that in the far back transmigratory time I must have once been a carrier pigeon, so strong is the homing instinct in me.

Evan said that we should be arrested for escaped lunatics, even if we avoided a similar penalty for reckless driving. At the same time he promised the driver an extra dollar if he made the desired train, this being a combination of his inborn English custom of tipping, that makes travel so easy, and a prudent way that Evan has of explaining certain disadvantages in what one wishes to do at the same time that he is smoothing the way for the doing thereof. All the way from Sandy Hook to the pier, I had thumbed the old yellow time-table, never realizing the changes that two years might have made in it, fastening upon one train after another as petty delays caused each in turn to be impossible. People

crowded about, chattering incessantly of the beauty of the bay and the approach to New York, the returning tourist pausing every few minutes to ask some foreigner how he liked America, then drowning the polite incoherence of the answer by a whirlpool of statistics about the length, breadth, thickness, and cost of the Brooklyn Bridge. I had quite forgotten how very loud we talk in public and how self-conscious we are. Very probably, however, I was irritable; for my heart was leaping on and on to a strip of wild land on a hillside, where pines and forest trees stretch their branches to the sky; scattering flower beds weave in and out among the shrubs in the southern corner cut into the hillside beneath a bank wall, and half a dozen dogs lie dozing in the sun upon the steps and porch of a rambling low house, where lives my father, the country doctor who carries comfort across the hills to the hard-worked farming people, even as freely as the sun and rain give strength to their crops.

Could anything be amiss? Not for the first time, however, had feet travelled faster than a telegram. No sedate gray horses at the station, no dear gray head in sight; so taking the first proffer of a trap, I had fled, leaving Evan to wrestle with the luggage and the local teamster.



Presently Bluff ceased his gyrations, and stood watching me, paw raised, tail rigid, quite at a point, while the maid was speaking; then as I turned to go down the hall, he gave one indescribable cry, so full was it of human expression, made a bound, touched the tip of my nose lightly with his tongue, then ran to a hook beside the tall clock, across whose face the full moon had sailed rhythmically for a hundred years, without ever waning, seized a dusty riding whip that hung there, — my old whip, — dragged it down, and laid it at my feet, while he backed toward the door, his eyes fixed on mine in a very delirium of joy.

Yes, Bluff knew me! It was two years since he had brought me the whip as the regular prelude to a walk, two years since he had heard my voice: many humans forget in that time. Bluff knew me, and was welcoming me home not as a stranger, but as one of his familiar world. Something tightened in my throat. I stooped to hug the old faithful, but he whirled about, and scampered toward the door. I picked up the whip and followed. Outside a mild gray twilight, mingled with the light of the quarter moon, pictured everything with soft outlines. As Bluff leaped down the steps, a pair of juncos flew from their perch in the honeysuckles, but soon settled to rest again.



Where was the dog going? Down between the weigelas and lilacs through the stiff little arbour to the garden, to the great bough apple tree whose trunk was encircled by a seat.

Surely Bluff had not forgotten. Then as he saw that I hesitated, he ran to a corner where stepping stones led up the bank to the open fields, gave a short bark and waited for me.

"Not to-night, old fellow; to-morrow we will go there," I said, seating myself by the apple tree. Instantly he thrust his nose into my hand, then curled himself up at my feet.

Before me was the garden where I had played all my childhood, until playing had turned into dreaming. It was unkempt, but it seemed to have more dignity and meaning than the garden of my memory; the unpruned rosebushes reached out long bare arms, or formed briery tangles according to their kind, the shrubs were massive and well grown, and had the soothing influence of permanence. In a sheltered corner a cluster of chrysanthemums, unharmed by frost, showed their silvery disks, and a single crumpled pansy looked up from the path where it had found footing. What was that perfume? Stooping, I separated the cold, damp leaves of a mat of Russian violets that grew from under the seat. Yes, there

were a dozen of the flowers themselves, anticipating spring after their hopeful habit.

Violets were my mother's flowers, and this was her seat. She went away when I was five years old, but I have not forgotten, and I always called this great apple with its ample branches that furnished nooks alike to me and to the robins and bluebirds, — the Mother Tree. I used to make bouquets and wreaths of my best flowers, and stick them in the knot-holes or hang them on the branches the particular day in June when father always shut himself into his study, and would not speak even to me.

Aunt Lot had said that I was a pagan to make an idol out of a tree and hang flowers on it, and scolded until I cried bitterly. Father, hearing my distress, came out to find the cause, and sat with me under the tree all the afternoon. From that day we understood each other, and the study door was never closed between us. Here, too, it was that he told me of his plans for the hospital that now stands over yonder by the town, where he meant to help all women for mother's sake. I only understood his moods gropingly in those days; for the subtle language of the human heart cannot be imagined, but may only be read by those who love and are loved in return, and the other love also came to me through loving father.



Beside the gift of healing and sympathy with everything living, father had the book madness. Not the disagreeable stuffy kind of mania that Nodier's Theodore died of, simply the hunger for the friendships that books offered him and the desire to keep such boon companions in the best of health and raiment. Woe was upon me even in my babyhood if I ever ate cookies over the lap of the meanest volume or cut the leaves of a magazine with anything less smooth than a paper knife! So it came about that when we took our winter holidays in Boston and New York, we mingled music, theatre, and pictures with many eager hours in a dingy auction room where books were sold, that stood at the meeting of three crossways. It is impossible to word the keen joy we both found within those smoky walls, father in the chase and bringing down the prey, I in retrieving, so to speak. This sport consisted in rushing the precious volumes safely past Aunt Lot's custom-house inspection and mixing them with the older residents in the book shelves until their identity was lost.

The risk of retrieving varied greatly with the size of the book itself. The "New English Canaan" and Josselyn's "Rarities" were easily pocketed, and they modestly kept the secret of their own value,

but to smuggle in the clumsy bulk of Gerarde's "Herball" in its snuffy sheep cover was an impossibility, and father had to suffer from weak muddy coffee for a fortnight. Good coffee was one of his few luxuries, and Aunt Lot knew well how to make her mild wrath felt. Exactly why she grudged father his precious old books I never could discover, possibly because she could not imagine any other point of view than her own, which narrowness she called economy. I very early found, however, that we were not the only buyers obliged to retrieve. Men came to that auction room whose word was law to hundreds of their fellows, and packed away their winnings in mysterious pockets like so many crimes, and I once helped an old thumb-fingered gentleman, who owned a railroad, to stow away a glorious misal illuminated on vellum in a pasteboard box marked "one ream legal cap!"

Since then as a married woman I have mingled with others of my class, and I find that this stupid book grudge among us is a more fatal disease than the book madness of men, and I only hope that some one will discover the bacillus that causes it. I also often wondered why father cared about Aunt Lot's protestations; such money as he had was his own to spend, but it was doubtless owing to his medical rule



of never reasoning with the unreasonable, and Aunt Lot surely belonged to the latter class, even allowing for her little kindnesses that were set edgewise like thin streaks of lean in overwhelmingly fat bacon.

In fact, her very name came from her habit of looking backward instead of forward at all the turning-points of her life and thus missing her best chances, until father had so often quoted "Remember Lot's wife" to her, that unconsciously she became Aunt Lot to us, though outsiders to this day think her name Charlotte.

My book-shelves also shared in the spoils, and each winter saw me more keen for the hunting. In summer I almost forgot books. What need was there for them when I had all outdoors around and above and below me, everything belonging to me through the sight, and telling its own story without the chilly intervention of print? All outdoors and father to take me everywhere!

\* \* \* \* \*

Said the Marquis of Carrabas to Puss in Boots, upon one of the rare occasions when he offered any advice: "We have but little money, but as long as we use our eyes faithfully, everything that they see under the sky is ours." In this way Puss grew up

with the idea that all outdoors belonged to her. By the way, did you ever know that the Marquis was really a country doctor, and that Puss was a female child?

\* \* \* \* \*

It was from father's shoulder that I peered into my first woodpecker's hole, receiving a sharp reproof in the nose from the bill of the irate owner. Who could compare printed thoughts to those long drives through the woods to the charcoal-burner's camp, the horseback rides single file along the river path to the sawmill, where a lumberman seemed always to be ill of ague from the dankness of the mill pond? Or the jolting trips in a buckboard over the corduroy road across the marshes to the bar, where the lighthouse boat waited for us, or yet the tramps in pursuit of plover and woodcock through the bottom lands? Do not be shocked, kind ladies of the Audubon Society; we obeyed the game laws, the birds always went to the sick, and I knew no better; also father was quite proud of me when I shot an old crow on the wing. If you try it, you will understand why!

Then again I would stay for days in my garden, grubbing in the few ragged borders that the vegetable greed of the man of all work and Aunt Lot's

love for spiky foliage beds left me, planning what I should do in the "some day" that always seemed a matter of course to me. The very first thing that I should do in that happy time would be to send away the gardener, and then I would have an iron pot painted red, with red geraniums in it and conch shells to edge the beds, like those in the garden of the grocer's wife, for my taste was then in the Indian war-paint stage.

When autumn came and outdoors put on her iron mask to shield herself from cold, I crept back to the study and made friends again with books, and read each new catalogue, lying flat on my face upon an old hair-cloth lounge, with Timperley's "Dictionary of Printing" (which, being lumpy, heavy, and weak in the back, was constantly falling off its shelf) for a reading-desk. Ah! web of Fate! it was well that I did not see you weaving the pattern of my life among those pages; being young, I might have resented you and spoiled the fabric.

One day father discovered in a catalogue among some curious medical books a copy of Dodoens's "Herball." This he had long wanted for its absurdly quaint descriptions of the medical properties of plants. It was the English translation made by Henry Lite and printed in London in 1586. It bore the auto-



graph and notes of "J. Oldham, chirurgien," and a verse from his pen : —

"Reader ! (where Lite is in the Right)

Peruse in grateful strain,

And where Dodoneus is Erroneus

Correct him clear and plain.

J. O. 1799."

Evidently Oldham had differed so much from the author that his corrections were both clear, plain, and plentiful. Though valuable from father's standpoint, it was a volume safely within the limits of his purse, and the day of its selling he settled back in his chair determined to hold the book against the field.

It was a stormy February day, and there were only two or three bidders of the class that buy on general principles, who dropped out after a little, leaving my father's terse bid to be echoed by one other in a distant corner. The price began straightway to climb hand over hand. What would Aunt Lot say ?

Finally the hammer fell, and father flushed with victory gave his name as the purchaser ; the voice in the corner did likewise. The seller paused, saying that there was a mistake somewhere, and proceeded to put up the book again.

I could see that father was going to be stubborn,



and I trembled for the other person. I saw him clearly as he stepped forward, a man of thirty, slightly built and muscular, with a strong face and a pair of steel-gray eyes that could see through a wall.

The two men looked each other in the face, the younger gave a quizzical little smile, at me it seemed, waived his claim, and the clatter of selling recommenced.

Afterward as we picked our way downstairs in the dusk, father hugging his Dodoens, Gray Eyes was close in front of us, and during a moment's pause father held out his hand and thanked him for his courtesy. In short, the book of contention became the book of introduction, for they instantly found that they had mutual friends. Before a year was out they discovered in truth that they had almost all tastes in common; they liked the same breed of books, cigars of the same shape and moisture, country life better than that of the city, and finally they agreed that they both loved me; but in this rivalry it was father who stepped aside and Evan was retriever.

Evan was English born, and like many a younger son of that vigorous race preferred free flight to sitting underneath in an overcrowded nest, with no more interesting view before him than that of his elder brother's legs. So, after circling the globe, he settled

in America to ply his craft of landscape architect, for which the time was ripe, and furnish the newly genteel with manor houses, Italian gardens, and pleached alleys all made to measure like a suit of clothes.

When we were married, alack! family matters called Evan to England, so for two years we lived away. One year was spent in travel, the other in a quiet English country home, these two years being divided by an illness of the kind where through sheer weakness one loses gravity, and seems to float through space seeking a footing either in heaven or earth and finding neither.

The English life was mildly pleasant; the country with its myriad touchstones, glorious. The rambling stone house, garden, and pleasance in Somerset that fell to Evan's portion, overflowed with such flowers as would gather pilgrims for miles around any New England village. Jasmine halfway to the eaves, Marechal Neil roses and Gloire de Dijons firm as cabbages, bushes of picotee pinks, begonias, Fuchsias grown to trees, sweet violets carpeting the orchard, and ivy making dignified haste to conceal everything unsightly. Herbaceous beds rioting in colour, and all to be had for the picking and the limited care of an erratic old fellow who had been under-gardener once on a great estate, but was climbing down in the world,

led by rheumatism, the English agriculturist's latter-day companion.

In the middle of this garden, opposite my morning seat, was an old stone sundial that had a strange influence upon me. I could watch the shadow creep across its face for hours without tiring; the half-obiterated letters of the legend carved upon it read — "I only mark the sunlit hours."

It was a good moral and a pleasant influence to grow strong and readjust oneself under. Domestic life flowed easily with Martha Corkle, Evan's old nurse, for majordomo, and a couple of the well-trained maids that cost so little there.

For a few months Evan was boyishly happy. He tramped the country-side over in visiting his old haunts, and the smell of the may and cowslips made his breath come short and the veins in his forehead grow tense with suppressed emotion. Did you know that the men of this race have a passion for flowers and are knit thew and bone with the homing, soil-loving instinct which they call loyalty? The morning of our wedding day, Evan laid a bunch of bride roses in the branches of the Mother Tree in the garden, so there are three now that understand.

The old days cast their spell upon him, days from which time had removed the sting and left only the



fragrance. Together we rowed on the deep, narrow river, and in the shadowy cathedral listened to the music that seemed to come from the organ without human intervention; in fact, we discovered each other anew.

The newly mated should always go away for a space, among strangers if possible. Readjustment cannot take place in the old nest; but, after that, all is safe. Then, too, not to go away is not to know the joy of return.

After a time Evan grew restless; his scrap of the family raiment was too small, he must weave his own and mine, and for the worker the looms of England are as crowded as the nests.

One September morning we sat by the sundial trying to unravel our "weird" and see clearly what was best. Evan held in his hand the offer from a prosperous manufacturer to lease the place for ten years, and while he brooded on the matter I held my peace. I could not trust myself to speak, though the words were crowding thick and fast to my lips.

Two letters were brought out,—one for Evan, and one for me. Two American letters. Evan's was lengthy, the bulk being typewritten, with an enclosed note in a well-known hand.



Mine was in father's odd stenographic characters. Instinctively we drew apart to the ends of the bench to read.

Five minutes passed ; I looked at Evan. He was gazing at the sundial and gnawing his mustache, then he looked at me, squared his shoulders, and said, "McVicker writes me to come back, that there is a splendid opening for the work that I like best." Then he waited for me to answer, but in a flash I could see the wish to be and do was in his eyes, that he had no desire to sit still and crumble like a respectable ruin.

"My letter is from father," I said, as soon as I could steady my voice. "He begs us to come home" (he who had come in my illness to draw me back to life, left again, and never written or spoken a lonely word before). "Aunt Lot is to marry the Methodist minister next month and devote herself to his eight children ! 'Come back,' he says ; 'I am hungry for you. This home is yours from now on, in deed and truth, all the place I need being for myself and books.'"

Instantly we were side by side again in the middle of the bench, our hands joined, and both laughing.

"Poor Aunt Lot !" said Evan. "What a fate ! But she will be no longer bothered by books,

because he will never have the money to buy anything but an almanac, and that species of dissenter moves about too much to carry a library if he had one. But, Barbara, I very much dislike taking or living in another man's house, even if he is your father. Besides, the pity of leaving all this," and he glanced around the garden.

"If we only take the part that isn't filled with father and books, we shan't be taking very much," I ventured.

Evan laughed, as the recollection of father's pervasion of every nook and corner came back to him.

Then I squeezed my hands between his, because Evan is always best content when he is protecting something, and fairly begged him to take me home. "As for a garden," I argued, "we will have a charming one, and we will begin it with your god-mother's fifty pounds that she gave us to buy something 'useful and instructive' for a wedding present. What could be better? The use will be beauty and the learning pleasure. I will be the only gardener, and you shall have a buttonhole flower for every week-day and two for Sundays."

"And go in and out of town and be a commuter, like the men of that hungry-looking crowd that I

used to see hurrying down the station steps of a morning, with unblackened boots and crumby clothes?" said Evan, sighing.

"If living in the country and working in town is being a commuter, yes," I said boldly; "but there are several kinds of them: those who do it because they think it is cheaper to live in the country (which usually means that they are where their friends do not see what they go without), and those who love the country for its own sake; and our home will be in the real country, not in a tailor-made suburb. You shall have your breakfast in time, no bundles to carry, no crumbs on your chin, or egg on your mustache, and I will never talk about servants. Oh, Evan! if you only knew" — then the nervousness left of my illness mastered me, I broke down, and it was all settled then and there.

Presently Evan startled me with, "How about Martha Corkle! I can't lease her with the place, a widow and all that, don't you know; a good sort, too, only overset and respectful. Couldn't we take her over, now? Save you a lot of bother, and she could overlook things — a regular old reliable."

I was about to say *No* emphatically, for I thought that Martha, conventional and rigid, would not be able to overlook in another sense many things in



a thoroughly New England home, but Evan asked so little and I so much. Then as I looked up, an idea seized me; I would carry a talisman from the Old world to the New, and I said, "You may transplant Martha Corkle (strictly at your own risk, be it said) if you will also take the sundial." So we four are here!

\* \* \* \* \*

Bluff sprang up sniffing and growled, but only for a minute. Evan was coming down the path peering among the bushes to find me. For a moment we stood silently arm in arm under the Mother Tree, then we heard the rapid trotting of a horse coming down the hill and in at the gate. Before I could shake off the spell of the past two years and realize that I was myself, father came swiftly across the orchard, calling, "Barbara! my child, where are you?" and gathered me up in his arms.

He had not shed a tear when I went away, but now they rained upon my face, mingled with the late falling leaves of the Mother Tree, while all the pent-up love of those two years was in that one word, Barbara!

Mother love is invariably held sacred, as it should be, but why has father love never had its due? It



may be rarer, though no less deep or unselfish. In fact, as I grow older and see other people's mothers, I think there is less self-consciousness in the father love. Who should know this love so well as I whose mother went away when I was five years old? In those years "Our Father Who art in Heaven" meant my father beside my bed, who soothed me until darkness bore no terrors. To one who has had such a father, unbelief in God is impossible.

Bluff could not keep in the background for long, and capered about in such evident comprehension of the whole situation that we were soon laughing, and I told father that though this was the garden of Eden, we were going to reverse the old order. Adam and Eve, instead of being driven out soon after their marriage, had come back from their wedding trip to feast upon apples, especially those of the tree of knowledge, and that we were going to turn out the serpent and make it into the most fascinating topsy-turvy garden possible, even the Garden of a Commuter's Wife! Also that we had imported Martha Corkle, the sundial, and a beautiful tall copy of the Pickering Walton's "Angler"; that we bought the last thing in a little book-shop in Southampton for him. I shall remember that shop a long time, for a smutty-nosed cat fresh from the

ash bin insisted upon perching on the shoulder of my smart new coat and rubbing against my face.

As we entered the door, all talking at once, there stood Martha Corkle herself, the stains of travel removed, clean, respectful, severe. I knew that she had a headache. Oh! why had she not gone comfortably to bed just that one night?

Father ejaculated, "Bless me!" then shook her cordially by the hand, never noticing that she was shocked; but in the evening meal and long fireside confidences I again quite forgot her.

\* \* \* \* \*

This will never do! While I have been day-dreaming they have brought the sand and dumped it in the wrong place!

## II

### CONCERNING GARDENERS

(IN GENERAL)

*October 27.* In my childhood's garden of dreams there was no room for a gardener. To me that name meant a being who was the interferer, not the mediator between oneself and mother earth, a man who tyrannized and sulked by turns; in spring was blatant and self-confident; in autumn, owing to divers mistakes, usually indignant with the quality of the soil, the slope of the land, the amount of rain, and the date of the coming of frost; in short, made us feel as if we had combined with nature to bring about his martyrdom, which he bore with something akin to triumph, enveloping himself with a halo of failures.

A gardener is of course a necessity to the very rich, — those unfortunates whose possessions have expanded alike beyond their personal control and out of the range of the affections, — to the overbusy, the ignorant, and the irresponsible. These four



classes may have a distinct yearning to grow flowers, fruits, and vegetables, and yet from the causes named are unable to assume the joyful responsibility of so doing.

On the other hand, it is not needful personally to wield the spade that turns the soil, or trundle the barrow that carries the manure. Well-directed brute force does this far more admirably, and digging and dragging make one's pen hand, or thimble finger (according to sex and employment) wretchedly stiff, besides causing a wicked extravagance in the matter of shoes and laundry work. But if one fails to pervade the planting and training with individuality, then is that garden like the proverbial egg without salt; and of such overdone, underdone, tasteless embryos there are plenty, and it is not people's fault if there are not more. It is merely because it is difficult to force nature into ungraceful attitudes or inharmonious colourings.

"I haven't seen anything like this for years. I've told Tomkins to plant fragrant things, but he says lemon verbena isn't used now, and mignonette makes the border lines uneven, but it doesn't do to thwart one's gardener, you know," was the plaint of Mrs. Jenks-Smith, one of the summer colony on the bluff, when, upon her going into my garden after a profes-

sional visit to father, I hesitatingly offered her a great bunch of rose, apple, and nutmeg geranium, annual wall flower, lemon verbena, mignonette, and lavender sprigs.

When mother was here, we never had a real gardener. She came from a tranquil, old-time home of simpler days, the last child of all; and though her miniature makes her very lovely, a flower herself, father insists that to paint her expression would have been impossible. She brought with her the will and skill of garden craft as well as many plants that modern gardeners ignore, though through their beauty, combined with their persistent permanence, their names are appearing once more in the seed catalogues.

The garden helper in her brief time was a cheerful man of all work who dug and delved as she guided him, and so much of herself radiated from her nook under the Mother Tree, with its vista down the long walk on either side of which the flowers were planted, and was so wrought into the soil, that it still remains after a lapse of twenty years of more or less motiveless experiment, to give the keynote to the garden of my life.

Though I was very young, I remember perfectly the eagerness with which she watched for the seed

catalogues, simple, convincing affairs lacking the gaudy colour horrors from which, happily, we seem to be again emerging.

When the lists had been duly made and reconsidered, — for the seed-lists of enthusiasts always have to be cut down and reconstructed, — they were mailed. The second rapture was when the parcels came. Oh, the delicious smell of the manila paper bags that held the bulbs, and the damp, bog moss that wrapped growing roots, in which I remember once finding a cranberry plant with a berry, and thus learning that the red fruit did not grow upon a tree like cherries, as I had thought! These two odours are among my primary memories, not to be forgotten any more than I could forget mother's way of lingering over my name as she pronounced it, the sky light in her eyes, of the purple blue of the fringed gentian, or the expression of father's face when on coming home from a long morning ride he found mother among her flowers; she would bring him a welcome bit of luncheon and some cooling drink as he rested under the old apple tree while she listened to his report of various happenings, and I absorbed scraps of food and conversation alike.

I never again saw that look in his eyes after



mother went away, but one day its counterpart flashed from Evan's, and then I knew that we loved each other without a spoken word.

From that time on, father, with his increasing practice and the hospital to direct, had little time to give to outdoor details. He saw that the horses were always in good condition, for this was often a matter of life or death to some one. He fed his dogs, and clung to them for their silent friendship, as he sat in his study with his books, or, with his gun, strode off up through the stubble fields, of an October morning; and he always liked to have a posy on his mantel-shelf or writing table.

Yes, one thing more: he told Aunt Lot to plan and plant as she pleased, but to make no change in the beds that followed the long walk, and spring and fall he watched the thinning out and resetting that insures the long lives of hardy plants, and letting only the most perfect blossoms mature their seed until year by year new colours, fanciful hybrids, appeared in the borders, now a thickly matted flower jungle.

Poor Aunt Lot and the man of all work soon disagreed, however; he was accustomed to have his day's toil planned for him by one who understood, and then do it in a methodical manner.

Aunt Lot had never before cultivated anything more than a city "dooryard," or controlled any service but that of a broken-spirited maid of the poor relation variety, consequently she was incoherent and unreasonable in her directions, expecting him to sow and reap, so to speak, on the same day. I became fully impressed with this by the time I was six years old, and at this time father, tired of settling differences, engaged a "gardener," thinking it would be easier to hold a man responsible than his elder half-sister, who always retreated behind a sort of concrete breastwork composed of reminiscences of his boyish shortcomings, relationship, and — tears.

Father and Aunt Lot looked upon the gardener from different points of view. Aunt Lot used him alternately as a weapon or a patent of superiority to be worn at village teas; father apologetically, as a housewife accustomed to New England thrift would refer to a housekeeper that she had been forced to employ, through her own incompetence; while I hated the gardener with the uncompromising honest hatred of childhood, because, whether he was called John, Pat, or Peter, he invariably regarded my efforts as things of little account, trod on the shells that I brought from the shore with infinite labour to edge

my bit of flower patchwork, and in spring always dug up my bulbs and hardy roots because it was easier than to dig between them, — a stern fact that sent me outside garden limits to the wild field beyond the strawberry bed, where I coaxed an intimate friend of mine, an up-country boy named Dan'l, who brought berries to sell, and did odd errands for father, to dig up two long strips one on either side of a grassy cart track that had once led to a hay-field, now reached by another road. Little I then thought that I was locating my garden of dreams.

The boy dug sturdily, the soil was black on top and mellow loam beneath — a happy combination, and my flowers throve far better than in the half shady, badly tilled garden bed.

I paid Dan'l with a jew's-harp, two old but well preserved valentines, and a purplish red necktie which Aunt Lot had bought father, but which he had immediately concealed under some papers in the little room beyond his office where he kept his instruments, and then given me for a doll's sash. The valentines must have signified more to Dan'l than they did to me, for he instantly began to lavish tokens upon me, hickory-nut beads, willow whistles, a home-made fishing rod, and a wreath of thistle puffs for my hat. This ornament I wore for several weeks



until one fell day I left the hat hanging in the Mother Tree, and the yellow birds pulled the puffs apart to eat the seeds.

But the most treasured gifts were the roots of the old-fashioned flowers that grew in unkempt wealth about his grandmother's garden. I had often been there when father visited the patient old soul, who was lame, and had admired the syringa, snowball, and lilac bushes that almost hid the house from the road, while the cinnamon roses crept out between the palings, and straggled up and down the lonely cross-road as if hungering for news, while in August the white phlox escaping into the grass made a snow-bank between the gate and the porch.

As I remember those valentines, — which, by the way, had been given me by our cook, — they were quite startling, and most unsuitable in their gender. One was surmounted by two papier-maché hearts, and bore the query, "Will you be my wife?" and the other had a scrap of looking-glass in the centre framed with the words, "In this you see the girl I love."

But such a mere detail did not dash Dan'l's ardour, for was he not ten years old, both romantic and chivalrous, and determined to be a soldier? While I, being eight at the time, and much interested

even then in hospital talk, seriously thought of going to battle with him as a nurse.

Circumstances, however, prevented, the chief among them being that there was no war at the time; father, to whom as a matter of course I confided my plans, declined to go with us as surgeon, and what was the use of a soldier to shoot people and a nurse with bandages if there was no one there to cut off legs?—an amputation being then my idea of the treatment to be given all soldiers, while lastly at this juncture Dan'l left home to work for a grocer at another village. I saw him yesterday in town, delivering goods at the hospital from a neat shiny wagon of his own. Alas for intentions, chivalry, and the daring soldier life! The flowers of our childhood's friendship have been more enduring, however. His last gift was a small rosebush planted in a lard pail to which he had given ventilation by perforating it with small holes.

“Granddad brought the bush this came off of from Boston b'fore I was born and it's just bust itself growing, and we've given away lots of cuttings; but this isn't any cutting, it's a regular year-old plant,” he said, as he thrust the pail at me.

The plant proved to be a fragrant, clear white rose with handsome dark foliage, the lovely Madame

Plantier that was brought over in the thirties and has never been surpassed as a healthy, willing bloomer. Now, even in its leafless state, it is a giant shrub in my tangled-up child border and will hold its place in the garden that is to be as well as mother's beds of hardy flowers. But of the perfunctory, skin-deep work combined of Aunt Lot and the four gardeners that separates mother's reign from mine, not a trace remains save a few scars on the grassy slope beneath the study windows, that mark the location of some fantastic foliage beds, which as for beauty or fragrance might as well have been made of gay carpet or spotted calico.

The ingredients of this class of bed are always the same, though the beds themselves may vary in shape and compounding—coleus *in vars*, red geraniums, alternanthera, dusty miller, hen and chickens, with salvias or cannas for centrepieces,—all worthy and innocent plants individually, but so hot and stiff when combined, affecting the colour-sensitive like the sight of a stout, short-necked woman walking in the sun with a tight gown and high collar.

"You are straying from gardens," murmur the leaves of my "Garden Boke," through which the breeze is rustling and conveniently drying the ink without aid from a blotter.



Ah, yes, but the subject is so broad, and the by-paths so many, that straying is inevitable. Besides, I am not exploiting the genuine skilled gardener of the main line, the developer of nature's resources, to whom all honour is due. The gardener to whom I take exception should always have his title enclosed in "marks" and is of the tribe that seems to launch itself at the ever-busy and guileless American of moderate means and good taste, who, desiring a garden and having little knowledge of the necessary detail and still less time to learn, hires a "gardener," pays liberally for seed and manure, and from the combination of the three entertains Great Expectations. If the man so hired were really what he pretends to be, all would be well. But the procession marching under the Sign of the Spade is a motley crowd indeed, especially in this land, where a knowledge of country life and its various processes, its pitfalls as well as its potency for good, though increasing daily, has not yet become a part of our national inheritance. As I look out over the hills and think of the people I have known during the past ten years who, for various reasons, have tried this glorious outdoor existence and failed to live it, and judge the cause, it seems to me that one and all they approached it wrongly.

The first difficulty is that people often think that by living in the country they can do without the comforts and necessities, lacking which city life would be doubly unbearable. Also they begin with no sort of preparation, either hereditary or acquired. Nature simply despises people who come to her as a last resort and try to squeeze a living from her, or otherwise harry her. She must be wooed understandingly, like any high-spirited woman, not bullied, for she has a capricious temper, and is at once a spendthrift and an economist.

Why, then, should any one expect by a mere "declaration of intention" and a railway journey to conquer the country and learn the secrets of the life it offers, in perhaps a single season? And why should one expect to lead a satisfactory country life upon a cheap basis that would not maintain life elsewhere?

"But," again hints my "Boke of the Garden," "what has this tirade to do with gardeners?" Everything, dear, patient, unresisting confidant, — everything. It is these experimentalists that cause bad service both in and out of doors, and by putting up with incompetence, encourage it.

### III

## CONCERNING GARDENERS

(IN PARTICULAR)

*October 27.* To return to the procession of gardeners who have crossed my path either directly or indirectly, by pouring their woes into father's sympathetic ear, he being a sort of confessor, labour-bureau, and first aid to the mentally and financially, as well as to the physically, injured of a fifteen-mile circuit, comprising open country villages and a factory town,—my knowledge of them is based upon stern fact.

The most usual and really least offensive of the group may be found abundantly in England also. They are the old men who have drifted through feebleness to drink, and think that gardening is merely a gentle disturbing of the soil and a tying up of vines in the opposite direction to which they desire to go, like the usual unqualified curate's idea of the ministry.

Second to these, are the young men with weak



lungs for whom outdoor work has been advised, who are naturally depressed and must not be expected to turn over the soil more than half a spade's depth. These we also pity. But we wholly fail to appreciate the services of the next grade—the natural fools, whose relatives steer them into gardening as a fitting occupation. These three classes may be excused as unfortunates not wholly responsible for the disappointments they cause.

The most trying type of all, however, is the one that I found here on my return,—the know-it-all individual who, after spending a few months in potting cuttings for a florist, and mowing dooryards, advertises, "Wanted, a position by a graduate gardener, to take entire charge of a gentleman's place. Can milk." He doesn't say *will* milk, mind you! Oh, if unsophisticated folk only realized the tragedy concentrated in those two words, *Can* milk!

Once arrived, he assumes the dignity of a professional, and considers himself as far above the mere labourer who cheerfully spits on his hands and wields the spade, as our present housemaid,—a young Irish-American whom father has with difficulty coaxed from the factory work that was killing her "to accommodate," and who is betrothed to a factory youth, whom she marries at Christmas, and

whose mother owns "rale" estate, — feels above the usual rank and file of "livin'-out girls."

The caste spirit among the American working classes? Most assuredly, quite as absurd and strictly drawn as among their employers. Neither are we as a family quite what we should be in this housemaid's eyes, I gathered from a conversation that took place between her and Martha Corkle, as we belong to the working class, for do not both father and Evan work for a living?

One learns much in two years of absence from home and country, much that is not realized until the return. Theoretically we are free and equal. In reality we are often bondsmen and not to our real or fancied superiors, but to our servants. Perhaps, however, when we are better educated to command, the fetters will be broken.

One thing we must always lack, now that slave days are past, and that is one of the great benefits of ancestry — the hereditary servitor. In the old countries, especially England, that is the inspiration as well as the despair of those who have lived in one of its home gardens and hope ever to equal it here on a similar financial basis — hereditary outdoor labour is as honourable as any profession that descends from father to son. The gardener has probably pottered

about the place from the time he was a chubby cheeked boy earning his first thri'penny bit by washing flower-pots, served an apprenticeship of experience, until in old age his trembling fingers can hardly hold the sprays of apricots that he strives to fasten against the wall which alone draws the heat necessary to ripen them. Unconsciously he knows the soil, he knows the spots that the sun warms earliest in spring, he knows the borders that catch the drip of winter rains, in what corners mildew flourishes, and which is the chief resort of the pervasive earwig, and all the other capabilities and shortcomings of the ground intrusted to him, be it large or small, as the physician knows the constitution of a patient that he has tended from birth. But to have this type of servitor, he must be inherited with the garden, and this implies the law of entail. What will you have? My previous decision about gardeners in general, and our present incumbent especially, was confirmed by the dumping of that great load of sand in the wrong place at a time when a day's delay in planting the bulbs might have brought frost to lock the ground until spring. You may argue that a few days' delay is a small thing, but that proves that you were not born to the soil.

I had said to Chris, the gardener, "Go over to the



river for the sand, and when you return, call me, and I will show you where to spread it." Instead, the man, a Swedish youth, a hospital protégé of father's, who was of the class that had once potted endless cuttings in a mechanical way while he thought of everything else than his work, drove in by the lower gate and scattered the sand over two strips that are to be shrubberies, simply because, as he said, in grudging explanation, he "thought nice beds of tulips in stripes would look good dere, and be more best dan vere you dink to put them." The bugle call of revolt has sounded, but in a novel and unusual way; the commuter's wife arises mentally against the "gardener," instead of *vice versa*, and his downfall will be swift.

It took the rest of the day to sweep up the sand and get another load. Meanwhile, Chris worked in a huff, as if a deep affront had been put upon him.

I could see by the hard, caked condition of the soil in the old flower beds, by the long walk, and in the vegetable garden generally, that it had not been deeply and properly stirred all summer. But when I asked him to fork up the ground thoroughly between the roots of some of mother's hardy plants he replied:—

"It is not best. In my country we do not so.

Stiff ground on top, he keep out both heat and cold."

A similar request to rake a mass of chickweed off a bed, instead of digging it in, brought the rejoinder:—

"It is time wasted. The winter, he will kill it," while every one knows that in most places this weed blooms at intervals in all months but perhaps two, and flourishes mightily.

In despair, I went to father and asked him who had given the man directions the eighteen months of his stay, where he came from, who recommended him, and whether he understood that I was to be obeyed?

Father appeared rather embarrassed for a man with surgical nerve, to retain which, perhaps, he has always been an avoider of domestic flurries. Then the end of his nose twitched as it does when he is cornered and wants to laugh, which he finally did as he said:—

"Chris was employed by a florist over in town, cut his hand, got blood poisoning, and turned up at the hospital. He seemed intelligent and a great reader. Why, really, Barbara, the first morning he worked here in spring, he stopped me when he was weeding radishes, and asked me if I liked Ibsen, saying he did not, 'because he takes the hope from man.' I'm sure, Bab, that showed discernment. And then, he

really prefers well-printed books to cheap affairs with paper covers, and quite appreciated the green morocco bindings on my Bacon's works. I haven't told you that last winter I secured a copy of that 1753 folio edition, in three volumes, with the Vertue portrait, that I missed through irresolution at the — sale, though I could not have it bound until after your Aunt Lot's marriage.

"He is all eagerness, too, about a course of reading I had planned for him this winter, even hoping for early frost, so that he may begin."

"Early frost is one thing he cannot be allowed to have, for I want open ground for a month to come," I said, hardly able to keep my face straight.

Dear old dad was terribly in earnest, and so easily imposed upon, and this wretch had keenly scented out his chief foible. It also made my heart ache to think of father's home loneliness during those two years, when he had no one to appreciate his treasures but a gardener. Book collecting up to a certain point is a secretive occupation, but something in the pleasure is lacking if there is no chance to display the latest purchase in a nonchalant way to the gaze of some one who knows its value.

"He may be discerning," I said, after steadying



myself ; "in fact, too much so for our needs, but not in gardening. You weren't thinking of employing him to catalogue your books, I suppose?" I ventured.

Then father laughed heartily to cover a certain confusion that told me plainly that he entertained Quixotic views of Chris's capabilities of education, and stammered :—

"My dear, he can write like copper plate!"

"Were the vegetables good last summer?" I continued frostily. "There seems to be very little over in the root cellar."

"No, not very, but—er, you see it was first dry and then wet—quite wet."

"Why have the grape vines been allowed to tumble off the arbour and lie on the ground?"

"Chris said the string I bought was poor."

"Why isn't the celery banked yet?"

"He says the new way is to let it get a touch of frost first."

"Is he cheap?"

"Barbara, my child, you know I never beat down the price of labour."

"Of what use is Chris?"

"He has some good points, and—er—we must have some one, for Tim has all he can do to follow me about and keep horses and stable in trim."

"Mother was her own gardener, and I want to follow her as closely as I may and yet be quite myself," I said gently.

"Then all will be well, indeed," said father, a load seeming to slip from his shoulders, "for after all I believe that I must have let Chris go," he continued, a suspicious twinkle in his eyes, "for he told me yesterday that you do not appreciate him, and that sympathy is more to him than wages. He announced that he can 'go to the big house on the bluff where folks never interfere with the gardener.' Though, come to think of it, his remarks were hardly consistent, for 'letting alone' is not sympathy, and I believe he mentioned that they offered wages which were really fabulous.

"Still, I am afraid you'll be disappointed. You are so eager to block out your garden and plant all those bulbs before frost, and Evan is too busy in getting settled at his work to do more than give you advice. I fear you are undertaking too much, and you will have no time left for enjoyment."

"Not a bit, and nothing could suit me better. Now, you dear old father, please pay me every month the wages that you paid Chris and—you shall see—well, either something or nothing. You may not notice the difference at first, but you will

soon. Oh, daddy, daddy, I don't believe, after all these years even, you know exactly how I love flowers and all the things that made the old home, which are increased tenfold in the new. Evan does, and that is the wonder of it, and the reason why he is content to take up this life and help to make it surer for me every day. The thought of what it all means for the years to come goes singing through my head even when I'm asleep. I want to *do* the things, not have them done for me. You know you always preach that babies brought up by servants and led in after dinner are not at all the same things, nor as lovable, as those cuddled and nursed by their mothers. And it's the same way with a garden.

"Of course I must have an animated shovel in the person of a useful man, maybe a boy to do weeding in the growing season; and that reminds me that I must ask Tim if he can't find me a man for to-morrow. We'll give Chris the rest of his month's wages and let him go, won't we, dear? for he is as impossible to gardening as a bump in a shoe to walking. And you need not have qualms, for he has really dismissed himself."

"Perhaps there is some one about the hospital I could get," suggested father.

"Daddy, dear," I begged, putting both arms



around his neck, and looking him in the eyes until our noses met, a trick of childhood, to fix his attention, "I'm the same Barbara as ever, but my eyes have seen and I've learned a few new things. I will sew for the hospital, grow flowers and vegetables for it, visit it, bring the poor convalescents over here to sit in the sun, grow white flowers for those who never go home, and give it a great deal more of your time than I want to spare, but please, please, let wages be wages, and charity, charity. The two are harder to mix properly than mayonnaise in hot weather. Don't you remember, dearest, what times we have had with the people that you have tried to serve without putting them under obligation, by letting them think they were aiding you, while it usually ended, after much discomfort, in *our* being considered under obligation? People that were not ill enough for the hospital, and yet needed tinkering. I don't think I was troubled by it at the time, but I observed, and the facts must have stowed themselves away somewhere in my brain; for since I have been a wife, and the domestic side of me is developing, I partly realize Aunt Lot's dilemmas, and the whole fantastic crowd flit in front of me, exhibiting their infirmities as if in warning.

"There was the man with the rheumatism who

thought he could care for cows because he had driven a milk wagon. The first thing he did was to dump a load of windfall apples into the corner of the pasture, so that when Black Bess, who was always greedy, came home that night, she did not lead as usual, and her ears hung down and she leaned against the gate, she was so intoxicated from the cider the fermented apples had made in her stomach. Then you had to fuss over her all night, and her milk dried up.

"Surely you remember the winter that Aunt Lot struggled with the cook who had a lame knee and couldn't go down cellar, and the waitress who had vertigo and couldn't take the dishes down from the top pantry-shelf without dropping them. Then the next cook couldn't even wash her dish-towels, because it hurt her to bend her liver, and when the washing was all put out, expected higher wages than if she had been able to do it."

"But Tim came to us through the hospital," said father, brightening as he caught at this plank in a whirlpool of disasters, "and surely we could not do without him."

"No, Tim is the exception to the rule. In the face of experience even, we should never dream of parting from him or he from us, I firmly believe."

Tim, Tim'thy Saunders, or Crumpled Tim, as he is locally called on account of his curious body, which, owing to a railway smash-up, without being absolutely hump-backed, looks as if a giant had taken him in his hand and literally "crumpled" him up, is a Scotchman, with a keen, not over-suave tongue, a sharp eye, and as honest a heart in his crooked body as ever beat. He has lived with father ever since I was little enough to call him my camel and think that being given a ride on his hunched shoulders was the finest sport in the world.

Now, happily for me, Evan and Tim had formed an odd friendship early in our courtship, based on national loyalty, so that neither could do wrong in the eyes of the other. This was providential and promised to make the "commuting" side of the daily life smooth, for Tim will never grumble at the extra horse, or if he has upon occasion to drive Evan to an earlier train than usual; while Evan seems fully prepared to take the blame upon himself instead of scolding Tim if they fail to catch it, which mischance of course may happen. Now, in addition, Martha Corkle, egged on by reasons of family and national pride, had served a good breakfast to the minute of promptness during this, as



we call it, "commencement week," so that the rocks of which neighbours are already so kindly warning us, me at home and Evan on the cars, have not appeared in the road. In fact, I've a glimmering idea that it is because we commuters and others hold our servants responsible for bridging certain inconveniences of living instead of acknowledging them and bearing the responsibility ourselves, that makes domestic service such a vexed question in America. Personally I do not know of but a single family of all my acquaintances with whom, were I a servant, I would be willing to live, and I'm not yet sure that I would live with myself; but I shall probably decide this when the anniversary of my return comes around.

In short, at present I feel at perfect liberty to give myself to the garden, body and brain. I think my soul always stays outdoors except at night, when it watches my sleeping body.

After a few moments' silence, during which each of us did some thinking, father said, "How would you like a married man with a family as—well, to please you I won't call him a gardener, but a 'general useful'? You know there are four or five good living-rooms that were once used, over the carriage-house. Perhaps a married man would have

more ambition, and certainly more experience, and his wife also might be occasionally useful."

"To a married man I have no possible objection, but to having his family on the place, no, if you please. There are doubtless very competent married men and women, but they are rarely married to each other. Oh, father, do you remember the last time those rooms were occupied? You surely haven't forgotten Peter Schmidt?"

"No; for though he insisted on straight lines, worshipped cabbages, and slighted the flowers, he was the most faithful worker we ever had or ever shall have," he replied, very significantly.

"I beg pardon. I should have said, do you remember, *Mrs.* Peter Schmidt," I hastened to add.

At this, father laughed until the tears came to his eyes, though there was a time when it was not considered a laughing matter, and fled to his gig, which Tim was driving around from the stable. I following to bespeak for the next morning the man with the shovel, — who, by the way, is an infinitely superior grade of being to the "man with the hoe," who merely walks slowly along, shuffling his inefficient tool.

## IV

### THE AMERICANIZING OF PETER SCHMIDT

*October 28.* Tim promises to furnish an "efficient mon" for me, but holds out no hope that it will be by to-morrow, asking at the same time if I prefer a foreigner, an American born, or naturalized. I replied that it is immaterial which, if the man is capable in addition to being honest and temperate. Chris had the two latter qualifications, but they seemed rather to sap his vitality than to be of any special advantage. Peter Schmidt, dear old fellow, was honest, sober, and capable as well; but the methods his wife took to transform and coerce his plodding, peasant mind and body into what she considered an American, were the cause of his downfall.

As to securing the services of a good native for manual labour, it is quite out of the question in a part of the country where the social centre is a combination of factory and market town. There are men who will "accommodate" for a few days



or a week at ploughing, haying, or raking, but to take a regular place for regular pay would be to become the male equivalent of the "livin'-out girl," and socially degrading to one owning a makeshift house and a few acres of land. So, without trade training, the native "chores" about at painting, carpentering, raising a few vegetables, or letting the shingles fall from his roofs and the land run out until the elder children are old enough to work in a factory, when they all move "over town," and some old country peasant, either Celt, Dane, Pole, or Hun, buys the place of the mortgagee, and begins to pull it together on a wholly different plane.

It was on the first day of November and my fourteenth birthday that Peter Schmidt and family came to live with us. I was sitting on the pasture fence cracking butternuts, which finger-dyeing occupation so absorbed me that I did not hear approaching footsteps, and was therefore startled by a voice that asked in slow and inverted sentences, if the "honoured doctor" lived near by.

Looking up, I saw a strange procession that halted as the man, its leader, spoke. This man was perhaps forty, though he might have been either older or younger. His bent shoulders and warped legs indicated the former age, while his

fresh complexion and wide-open though expressionless clear blue eyes, the latter. He was dressed in typical ill-fitting shabby store clothes, but his stout square boots and cap with a peaked visor were evidently of foreign make.

Behind him was a woman a full head taller, thin, long-armed, and bent about the shoulders. She had dark hair and eyes, with the complexion and the flat features which, when they appear in people of the north countries of Europe, give either the appearance of sadness or sulkiness. This woman's expression was compounded of both. She did not speak, but pulled her shawl together and stooped to chide a little tow-haired boy of five or six who was tugging at her hand. Behind the woman in turn followed two girls of ten and twelve, swarthy and flat featured as their mother, like whom they were dressed in a clumsy way that had withal a certain peasant picturesqueness.

While I was talking to the man, a small one-horse wagon, of the pattern used by vegetable venders in the town, rounded the corner; in it were a few very plain articles of household furniture, a large bundle, doubtless containing the family feather bed, and several small parcels neatly tied.

This was Peter Schmidt, his family, and posses-

sions, coming by father's directions to be our "gardener." He lived with us eight years before his duties as an American citizen led him to seek the more elevated position offered by a shoeshop.

When father told us Peter Schmidt's history, Aunt Lot was stirred with practical pity, and, always eager for any occupation that implied house-cleaning, giving advice, or regulating other people's affairs, instantly began to overturn the attic for old furniture and such garments of ours as might have escaped the general demand of those who, coming to the hospital in rags, had even less to wear on leaving.

In a couple of days the living-rooms over the stable were resplendent, owing to a combination of energy on the part of the Schmidt family themselves in whitewashing, scrubbing, and window-washing, in which even the small boy joined, the girls giving deep-drawn "oh's" and "ah's" of admiration. While the following Christmas the whole family came into the hall before breakfast to give us the season's greeting, each laden with a fat wreath made of ground pine, that they had walked two miles to the woods to gather, giving them as tokens of thankfulness that "we now hass a home," as Mrs. Schmidt said through tears that told of dark days.



Father was exultant. Here at last was the gratitude and appreciation that had too seldom crowned his efforts to better his fellows.

Little by little, Peter told father of his past. It seemed that since coming to this country sixteen years before, either ill luck or an unseasonable desire to better themselves, which really amounts to the same thing, had kept them on the move. Their very home-leaving had been ill judged, unpropitious, and hurried, that Peter might escape army service which would necessarily delay the early marriage upon which Karen was set, she then being a fellow-worker with him on a milk and cheese farm.

Peter? Oh, Peter had at that time evidently looked stoically upon matrimony as an estate not to be entered hurriedly; he would have preferred to go alone to America, establish himself, and then send for Karen. He already had the responsibility of partially providing for his old mother, a widow who still lived in a couple of rooms by the windmill where his father had worked. As he said, "she was homesick away from the sound of the sails going round," and "I too," he added, "think no sound can be made so fine as when the sails and the wind struggle together and there is much wheat to grind." Peter was a Hollander who loved his country in a

patient, sluggish way, and would have preferred, father thought, to have remained there all his days, army service and all.

There are many ways of loving one's country, it seems, as in other loves, the mental and the physical, and his was love of the absolute ground, and had no mental pride or consciousness. He had not the faintest conception of the Netherlands' rise and history; the Spanish wars were as foreign to him as the deluge; his pride was not of the country's power in commerce or art. He might have heard mention of the names Rembrandt, van Dyck, Frans Hals, Plantin, but they meant nothing, though he had lived within a few hours' walk of Amsterdam and its wonderful Rix Museum. His plodding mind waded in the rich black soil that the plough turned over, never rising above the bearded barley that grew from it. He found greater beauty in the straight, sluggish canals than in all the rushing, forest-banked rivers in the world. He could not think quickly or hurry, and the soil, was it not always there, at once tangible and immovable, the one thing in which he seemed to have full confidence? In short, he was peasant to the core, intelligently and contentedly so. What a pity that he should be dragged away and awakened, for of such is the strength of the

earth. Surely there is often something sad about ambition.

What if the earth that grows the wheat, the bread of the world, should insist that it was a finer destiny to fill the flower pots that hold the plants in a conservatory?

Once in America, the Schmidts had at first worked here and there until money enough was obtained to carry them West to take up a farm hold. This proved a failure, owing to the fact that Peter did not understand the difference of methods, climate, etc., and also lacked means to live while the land was being improved and the first crop gathered. After ten or twelve years of struggling, privation, and chance work for others, they drifted slowly eastward, eight children having been born to them, of whom, owing to hardship and the fevers of new countries, only four were living. Karen had then worked out by the day in the factory town, taking her baby with her and putting it to sleep in a clothes-basket or any convenient nook, while she washed and scrubbed. At last it also died, and then she broke down completely and went to the hospital, where father found her, and when her weary body was rested and repaired he sent the family out here.



As Peter's work was chiefly with the soil, he was content, the fruit and vegetables thrived, the flowers languished. As Aunt Lot kept but one maid, Karen often helped us in emergencies, for a woman likes to have a little pin money. In those days she was always begging to do some little task in return for the many ways in which we aided her, and Aunt Lot took great pains in showing her how to cut and fashion over my clothes for the girls, as I was at least two sizes taller than either. How glad I am that I am fairly tall and quite slender; it is so convenient to be able to have a long reach in tying up vines, and then there is so much stooping to be done in gardening, and if one is stout, the flesh must always interfere like an impediment in a door-hinge.

During four years, agriculturally speaking, we had a time of peace and prosperity. Peter's ideas as to beauty were not mine, but he was devoted to his children, and the boy, his father's counterpart, was much with him as he worked. The hay was cut and cured as carefully as if the welfare of the nation depended on it. The vegetables were rowed up like soldiers on parade, and the grass edges were faultless. It was Peter who suggested tilling an unused field and growing potatoes and winter vege-

tables to help out the scanty resources of the hospital. Peter was slow, but oh, so reliable! True, he would insist upon shearing the roses and shrubs out of all identity, like so many cropped heads, and the most awful foliage beds were developed in his reign. But I think, as I now look back, Aunt Lot aided and abetted him. Also two gray drain tiles used as vases and filled with sad lilac petunias appeared like sentinels on either side of the walk from the road to the porch. I protested, but Aunt Lot said that Mrs. Schmidt suggested them and thought them grand, and it might hurt her feelings to remove them.

With my new vision I see that was a fatal mistake; where service is concerned, when we hesitate to protect our own rights, the dynasty will soon crumble.

Father revelled in the man's wholesome enjoyment of the earth, and of the mere planting and tilling. "We need such labourers," he often used to say as he watched Peter at work, — "labourers for the wide field and the great crop; such men have made the West. Our difficulty is that our Eastern labour is too small and detailed, and we scorn plodding peasant toil.

"I must tell Peter the opportunities of his class for new world citizenship."

Alas, how citizenship and the way it is regarded depends on those whose opinions first tinge the vision of the immigrant, as well as upon the calibre of the woman he marries. Sometimes when I think how far wives often unconsciously warp the husband's point of view, and cramp his worldly attitude, it makes me shiver with fear of the responsibility.

Father talked to Peter, good wise talk, and in course of time he took out his naturalization papers. Karen also, who was far more alert than her husband, was a perpetual influence goading him to "be American," but for different reasons.

She had made a friend in the village, a woman who twenty years before, owing to a pertly pretty face, had married far above her station. In consequence her tongue had been since sharpened on the grindstone of snubbing until she had become a sort of village firebrand whom few could touch and escape a scorching.

This woman was Karen's instructor in the language of liberty which, according to her reading, was anarchy, and it was from her standpoint and with her precepts that Karen goaded Peter to "be American."

In the fifth year a change was perceptible, not yet in the man, but in the woman of the household. Perhaps I should say women, for Marie and Trina (short



for Katrina) were fifteen and seventeen — no longer children, but domestic factors.

Karen had constantly begged Aunt Lot that when Trina was old enough, she should be taken into the household. So as she was now a well-grown girl, Aunt Lot suggested that the time had come, only to be surprised by the reply, "Trina has no mind to be livin'-out girl; she wish to get 'edication.'"

Aunt Lot was rather nettled at Karen's tone, but father said education was a worthy desire, that he would talk over the matter with the Schmidts, and see what tastes the girls had, and try to advise them as to the best channel.

He returned from the interview somewhat perturbed, finding that Karen's idea of education was purely superficial, being to learn as little as possible of something to get into a store or become a typewriter, anything in short, to escape the stigma of "livin' out," which she in some unaccountable way had come to regard as akin to a crime. While, on talking to the girls, he found that they were of the hopeless, shiftless order, scarcely knowing on which finger to place a thimble, about all they had learned at the local public school being a desire to seem, rather than the industry to be.

Then a demon entered the family, or perhaps it

might better be called a microbe, as they came in fashion about that time. It should have been bottled and labelled "The social importance of clothes," a disease as deadly as appendicitis and more prevalent.

Karen had, up to this time, lived much to herself, dressing neatly but in the old world simplicity of her class that well suited her; for those whose gait has been formed by the swinging of the wooden shoes and the shoulders shaped by the milk-yoke, had best beware of high heels and the fantastic fashions descended from the French through the interpretation of a factory town. One day Trina appeared in a new but flimsy coat, the week after one of mine, nicely cleaned and freshened with new collar and cuffs, had been given her; then Aunt Lot, thinking some accident had befallen the garment, made inquiry.

Karen's face took a threatening, sullen expression that quite frightened Aunt Lot, while her black eyes snapped, as she blurted out, "Trina have it slappit at her in school dat her coat vas ole clothes and de cuffs put on to make longer de sleeves. She cry with shame, and she shall not bear such."

Father insisted that Aunt Lot could not have understood and that such nonsense was impossible, but a little later on he was somewhat taken aback

by Karen's asking him to have a new front door put to their apartments, because in going in the present door the kitchen was seen in reaching the parlour.

Aunt Lot always insisted that father was to blame for yielding the point, but that is neither here nor there.

Callers began to drop in at the Schmidts' at all times of day, wash days and all, in direct defiance of country custom, and we often noticed that Peter, instead of sitting down to a hot meal, carried his dinner outside and ate it alone in one of the sheds, or, in warm weather, under a tree.

Next I discovered that the callers were people for whom Karen was doing cheap dressmaking in order to obtain more money to "live like Americans." Lace curtains appeared in the windows in due course, and before long a parlour organ was bought and squeezed in at the new front door, though not one of the family could as much as whistle a tune.

Peter worked steadily on, growing more silent day by day, and clinging closer to the companionship of the little boy, who was merry as ever. Once father asked Peter the cause of the change in his home life and if he was content. But he only looked from right to left like a dumb animal in pain, and did not answer. One October night, shortly after this, as



father was fastening his horse in the stable he heard loud talking in shrill feminine accents. The voice said in English, the home language now having been dropped as an undesirable reminder of the past, "Vell, if you don't tink I keeps tings right and cooks to suit, den I can do vitout you altogeder. I vill take the childrens away and keep bourders, and I can do many oder tings and have no need of you. Dis besides, I vill see to it you shall send no more of your vages to dat old voman who liked not me. Let oder peoples keep her."

The "old woman" was Peter's mother, to whom he sent the tiny stipend that kept her from being a public charge. Karen somehow did manage to stop the next remittances, and later it was rumoured about by a fellow-countryman that the mother had died in the Dutch equivalent of the Poor House.

Then Peter staid outdoors except absolutely at night, scarcely tasting his cold, unpalatable food, and the crisis came rapidly.

In a few days, owing to an emergency, Aunt Lot asked Mrs. Schmidt to do a little washing for pay, of course, as usual. She was always paid as if she had been a wholly outside worker. The response was a curt refusal owing to the fact that she was making Trina a new dress for "a big dance over

town," but under her breath Aunt Lot averred she heard her say, "I'm no servant. Peter, he a fool to work for the doctor, but I'm not hired, too." Aunt Lot did not tell father of this, for it was quite enough to take up things said aloud, that could not be passed as unheard.

Mrs. Schmidt, though unconsciously, at last took the fatal step and threw aside the protection of caste to assume social responsibility by giving a party far beyond her means, or rather, the Misses Schmidt gave it. "Socials" and dances were of frequent occurrence in the fall and winter months among the foreign farming element, but none of this class were asked, being now scorned by Karen as "pisans, vit no ambishun." Classmates of both sexes from the public school and the Lutheran Sunday-school were alone chosen for this function which Karen's evil genius argued would place the girls on a footing in the local country society. Marie was now employed in a flashy millinery store in the town where her wages, called by her "salary," barely paid for her shoes and her car fare.

Of course the firebrand who had for the past two years guided the family affairs was mistress of ceremonies. People came to and fro, and I found myself almost avoiding going about the garden, for

fear of appearing intrusive, so completely we were enthralled, and so uncomfortable had the condition of affairs become. That very morning Tim had given a roundabout warning that if his stable precincts were daily interfered with by the Schmidt women there was no use in his trying to do his work.

During the afternoon there was much hammering at the stable, to which Aunt Lot called father's attention, but he merely laughed, and said he supposed they were decorating. We wondered; for the rooms, though comfortable and ample for dwelling purposes, were hardly suitable for a ball.

But when he returned at midnight, after a long drive across the hills in a pouring rain that had set in at dark, and discovered there was no place where he could get under cover, he was angry indeed. The vehicles from the carriage house were standing out under the trees, carelessly covered from the wet, while a somewhat dreary and spiritless dance was going on in that building to the music of harp and fiddle, the participants being chiefly an undesirable class of factory hands, asked because others had declined, and a few young people of the neighbourhood who, evidently having come from a kindly schoolmate feeling, looked conscious and out of place. Father rang the stable bell for



Tim with a clang that startled us even in the house, and when Tim ran out, white and scared, pointed to the horse and chaise, and strode in with the rare stern look on his face.

For an hour father and Aunt Lot talked, recalling the various omissions that had finally culminated into absolute defiance, and decided justly that whatever influence had changed the once crouching, humble woman, she certainly now completely dominated the man. That they could no longer live on the place was decided then and there, but father argued that if work and residence were separated, all might yet be well. Aunt Lot thought differently, and yet she too pitied Peter, who, though helpless to throw off the present condition, was personally a valuable servant.

Father decided that in the morning he would have a talk with Peter, and he went to bed dreading the ordeal more than the severest surgical operation. His temperament was not to wound except to the better heal. In this case the result seemed dubious, and to inflict or allow needless pain was a crime in his eyes.

We had not finished breakfast before Aunt Lot was very unnecessarily reminding father of the duty before him and of everything he must say,

when a knock sounded at the front door. This almost immediately opened, and in walked Peter, followed by his wife.

Father afterward said that he thought at first they had come to make some explanation, but a glance told me otherwise.

Peter had evidently been slowly and persistently worked up to a terrible still-white heat which almost made him believe himself wronged, and Karen, her eyes glistening, and her head darting forward from her bent shoulders like a flat-headed adder, kept goading him, allowing him no time for thought or retreat, though his frank wording of the grievance was not what she would have had it.

"Ve move away," he gasped without preamble and looking at no one. "Not much people came to de barty, and my girls have it slappit at dem dat dey are no better dan pigs to live in vit a stable. Yes, ve move away to-morrow, mein Gott, to-day even."

Father replied quietly, looking only at Peter, that it was exactly the thing he was about to propose, and that Peter might take a few days to rearrange his affairs before continuing the fall ploughing.

"Ploughing! Ploughing iss it?" shrieked Karen, stung to added fury by being completely ignored, and

by the fact that the failure of her social hopes had been openly confessed. "He vorks no more and he ploughs no more for you. No more vill he be a servant to any man, nor vill I. He is American citizen already, next month he vote. But for you are ritsh" (what a hiss she put into the word!) "he can have as much say in dis place as you!

"Yes, and you tread us down; you make us to live in a stable and bring disgrace on my girls, so they be slappit at, and dat vomans dere" (pointing her finger at poor trembling Aunt Lot) "she tink I'm a servant vomans too, and last week even she dare ask me to do a vash.

"But dere are folks so much ritsher dan you dat you are nobody. You tink you can keep down de poor in stables like dey do in de ole country, but you cannot—cannot, mein Gott. Peter, he vill vork in a shop and be no more livin'-out mans, to shame his girls." Then she shook her bony fist almost under Aunt Lot's nose as father stepped between. How they went out none of us knew. My next recollection was seeing father go to his medicine closet, pour whiskey into a glass with a trembling hand, and without adding water hold it to Aunt Lot's lips, and as she took a sip and choked feebly, he swallowed the rest, went into his office and closed the door,



while she began to cry softly, saying between sniffs:—

“So—many—years—furniture—clothes—milk, vegetables—took—care—of—them—measles—whooping-cough—that good carpet good as new—that front door—never will—we never will trust anybody again!”

But of course we shall, you know!

Thus Peter Schmidt passed from the open fields to the shoeshop.

On election day father saw him at the polls. In the evening when driving in the moonlight past some land that Peter had ploughed deep and left in great furrows for the frost to sweeten, father saw a strange object on the ground. Stopping, he crossed the road to see if it was some creature or merely a shadow.

It was Peter stretched in a fresh furrow, his head buried in his arms, his whole body shaken by sobs, while crouching trembling by the wall was the little boy.

Report reached us that late the same night Peter, mingling with his new comrades of the shop, was half urged, half forced to drink with them to honour his first vote. The rank liquor was strange to him, he became deeply drunk, and half led, half dragged, he was left upon his doorstep.

This is why the living-rooms at the stable have remained unoccupied and why I prefer that they shall be so unless, well, unless Crumpled Tim takes a bride.

Yes, I know, I suppose that I shall yet be disappointed in Tim after all these years, and that his queer nubby feet will prove to be cloven. But if Sisyphus was so persistent in rolling a stone up hill, why shouldn't we be equally patient in keeping our opinion of human nature on the up grade?

## V

### A RAINY DAY

#### MORNING

*October 31* (morning). Three days' delay, but Chris has gone, and October wearing goloshes is quietly plodding down the road to the rhythmical patter of steady rain.

Tim has secured a "general useful" with a round, cheerful countenance and an excellent personal reference from the next town. In fact, Bertle the newcomer, in addition to knowing which end of the shovel belongs in his hand and which in the ground, professes to be able to mend tools and tinker about in a truly encouraging fashion, having in fact brought a well-equipped tool chest with him. Even now on the day of his advent, I can hear him pounding away in the little tool house that holds the garden necessities, after the manner of a thrifty man who uses rainy days for tool-mending and such-like work.

It is very necessary that the "general useful"



should be able to use hammer, saw, and glass cutter, as well as rake and spade, or the commuter in whose garden he digs will be buried by an autumnal leaf fall of small bills, more deeply than were the babes in the wood by the well-intentioned robins.

Chris the literary seems to have massacred the old garden implements and cremated their remains, for of whole tools there are next to none, while the usual array of halt and maimed are likewise missing, so that Evan has ordered a fresh supply, all of which I must list in the special part of my garden book that treats of his godmother's wedding gift of fifty pounds for something "useful and instructive" and what we did with it, so that we may judge, when the account is closed, if the conditions have been complied with.

Bertle is now cleaning out a jumble of broken flower pots, old seeds, and boxes holding odds and ends of Paris green, hellebore, and various other compounds that bring death to bugs and sneezing to humans; and he is also going to whitewash the walls of the little building. One comfort about Evan is that he not only knows exactly what he wishes done, but is able to leave directions in such a form that they cannot possibly be misunderstood.

When you live in the country and your husband goes daily to town, you will soon recognize this trait as akin to genius.

Already I can see the complete tool house in my mind's eye from simply hearing Evan's directions to Bertle. There are to be racks for holding pots graded according to size; wooden pegs across which the various rakes, hoes, etc., can be laid; hooks for the water-pots and grass edging shears; corner shelves for holding the measuring line (to be used for vegetables, only I shan't allow it in the flower garden), twine, trowel, weeders, while under these is room for the two lawn-mowers, the wide for general use, the narrow for borders. On the opposite side a wide shelf either for potting, cutting, or to hold the flower jars when I'm filling them for the house, and above the shelf, hung between leather loops (made of an old rein) pruning-shears, flower scissors, a hammer, a saw, and a bag of assorted nails and tacks are hung like articles in a dressing-case.

Bertle is a Dane, quite familiar with the English words necessary for asking and receiving directions, but fortunately not with those used either in lengthy discussions or literary dialogues.

Evan suggests that we now have all the human

material on the place necessary for spontaneous combustion, or a race riot, and really it is an international mixture, much like the general population and compounded by circumstances alone.

Tim, driver and stableman, Scotch and violently of the Dissenting Church.

Bertle, Danish, general useful, religion probably lacking.

Martha Corkle, cook *pro tem.*, awaiting developments, English, aggressively of the Established Church.

Delia, waitress and office maid, Irish-American, violently Roman Catholic.

Elizabeth (cook until Martha's advent), laundry and dairymaid *pro tem.*, native and Methodist.

Martha Corkle, before whom the necessity of tolerance of religious opinion and race was mentioned, came to me this morning, full of dignity and responsibility, and said,

"Mrs. Evan" (she never accords me my last name, that honour belonging to the portly mother of ten and wife of our elder brother, the vicar), "I hope that you do not think I shall demean myself by taking notice of opinions held in my kitchen or outside; that is unless things are disrespected which are my vitals, though of course it would



serve better for authority if they" (servants, not vitals) "were all of the Church and came in to prayers every morning as they used when I served at the rectory. Then a word at all was a word against the family as much as me, Mrs. Evan. Not that I holds you responsible, ma'am, not at all, and I feel for you, ma'am, for what can be done in a place where there is no tenantry to be brought up to service, and all the help comes from different places and reared on disagreeing victuals, as it were? It all seems as wild-like to me as Australia, where my brother Joe bides, savin' the lack of those jumpin' kangaroos, and I'm always expectin' them. No, Mrs. Evan, on my word, I shan't contend except for vitals, and no disrespect intended, ma'am."

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How steadily it rains! a wholesome fall storm that the ground absorbs. Certainly gardening makes one conscious of the great variety of ways in which the work of moistening the soil is done. To some people all rains are alike. In the city I have never heard any distinction made except that of a storm or a shower. I well remember being ill one spring at the planting season and listening to the rain as I lay in bed. I asked a town-bred maid whom we

chanced to have, what sort of rain it was. She looked blankly at me, then out of the window as if hardly comprehending my meaning and replied, "Just plain rain, miss, there isn't any thunder." A countrywoman would have said either a growing, a cold, a washout, a spring filling, or a smart rain, according to the facts.

I am sitting in the long, unsealed attic that is lighted with a dormer window at either end. A comfortable open-fronted wood stove glows away by the chimney that fills the centre of the loft. This has been my playroom ever since I left the nursery and those far-away mother arms slipped from about me. Now that I've come back I think that I appreciate its privacy more than ever, and keep it for a playroom still. Why may not grown-ups have playrooms where they can throw off conventionalities and restraint, be silly or only idle, and romp either mentally or physically as they please? The garden of course is the best place for these wild moods in seasonable weather, but even then one needs an indoor retreat, a place to lie flat on an old, unhurtable sofa, and think alternately of everything and nothing, well out of the reach of sudden callers.

What odious things callers are! I love my friends

dearly, but friends never call. They simply flit in, knowing the times and seasons when you are at liberty, or being mistaken and scenting anything out of joint, they pat the dogs, pick up a book to borrow, a flower to smell, and flit out again, as if that alone was the object of their visit, leaving you comfortable and unembarrassed. Or, finding that all is well, they draw off gloves, unpin hat, and stay to luncheon without forcing you through the responsibility of asking them, a relief when you are dubious of the meal. Unless people have this tact they can never really be called friends or safely asked to come freely within the sacred home precincts.

A country doctor's daughter, like a minister's wife, has many curious experiences in this respect, and my time of trial has arrived.

In truth the two days' gap in my gardening operations has been filled to overflowing with callers, well-intentioned folk who would be friends if they but knew how, people of many grades, all kindly eager to welcome me home, and advise and ask questions varied with remarks about Aunt Lot's marriage and queries as to whether I didn't think father had aged during my absence.

I had intended giving a sort of parish high tea a little later on, bracing myself to answer questions



*en masse*, fortified by a fine new gown and Evan to share both admiration and criticism. Not that we exactly enjoy this sort of thing. We should much prefer saving up and giving them a musical afternoon, Evan even perhaps being coaxed to play the violin himself. But when you wish to entertain people, you must give them what *they*, not what *you* like, and what that is remains to be discovered. However, this festival is still before me, while the questions and advice have set me to thinking and make me quite reconciled to spending this rainy day in the comfortable fastness of the attic.

Before I went away Aunt Lot represented the family, but now one and all, patients and neighbours, recognize me as mistress of the house, and are prepared to hold me socially responsible. This is a great change for the young person who, three years ago, never could be prevailed upon to take a table at the annual fair or to make cake for the monthly sale upon the proceeds of which the subsistence of one of the three village ministers depended.

I have been freely reminded of what a good cake maker Aunt Lot was, and I'm trembling lest Martha Corkle's confections should fall below her standard, as I've promised three loaves, a pan of cookies,

and a braised ham for next week's harvest-home supper, and they must be faultless, for the supper is for the hospital.

A school friend of my mother's, a very charming woman, but rather a borrower of trouble, raised a more serious point by saying that, glad as she was to see me back, she hoped that I had not used undue influence to take Evan from his native land, as she thought such experiments dangerous and against the nature of things. I'm afraid that my answer was rather heated. It is *not* against nature for the female to have the say as far as possible in choosing the location of the home.

I am American to my finger-tips, though I fully recognize the fascination and protective atmosphere of old world tradition, but as the old proverb says, "Every bird finds its own nest charming." Now, as a matter of course, all birds'-nests are not equally well located or built. The oriole weaves a sky cradle moated by the free air, the cuckoo throws together a few sticks in a bush — each to her taste. The only bird despised and scorned of all is the outcast, the cowbird, to whom, having none of her own, all nests are equal and a matter of indifference. The only being so despised is the songster without a nest to uphold.

My nest is America, Evan's England, and the interweaving of the two makes the most logical combination possible. But why should I expect Evan to move his building materials overseas to join mine instead of the reverse? Because of a fact in the law, also of the joyous republic of Birdland, to which I would call the attention of all conscientious women with foreign husbands. *It is the female who always chooses the nesting site.* Nature rules that the location of the home is of more vital importance to her whose life is of the home, and nests are also usually located in the region of the best food supply—therefore America!

\* \* \* \* \*

Some of my guests expressed curiosity as to what I should do for amusement in such a quiet place, as if I had not been able to amuse myself in years gone, and I foolishly unfolded to them in part my garden hopes, which they straightway translated according to their different temperaments to mean everything from an Italian garden with terraces, statues, a fountain, and clipped green walls to a market garden wherein Evan was to raise cabbages and afterward peddle them for a living. This last notion went the rounds from the Village Gossip via



the Village Liar to the Emporium, from whence it was freely distributed up the road, and finally found its way to Evan on the cars. The Emporium is not a shop, as you might think, but a very genteel middle-aged widow of comfortable means whose house stands directly at the head of the village street, so that people taking the road that branches on the right toward the town, or on the left that goes up through the farming region, must equally pass her door. Thus, being in a position to hear and collect news, she is also conveniently located for its distribution and constitutes herself local news agent, an occupation she greatly enjoys, and quite safely, as she keeps her own skirts clear by never guaranteeing her wares and always premising a bit of gossip by, "I don't know if it's true, but they do say," etc., etc.

I knew exactly what sort of flowers I meant to have, though I had not as yet quite formulated their grouping so as to explain it glibly to strangers. I want a purely American garden, which may be interpreted as anything and everything that will grow in our sparkling but capricious climate; also everything is to be in plenty — no single plants, but great masses and jungles of flowers without bare ground showing between.

Evan has sketched me a rough map of the garden, showing how the ground could be utilized to the best advantage without changing its characteristics, which were those that best harmonized with the house. This, without being an antique, is of that respectable no-period style of the forties, when we began to forsake good, foreign models, and grope for ourselves — a style that is best summed up in the words Early American. Strange to say, his plan does not satisfy me. It is the dearest, sunniest, homiest house in the world, and yet to turn the acre of ground that immediately surrounds it into the copy of an Italian, Dutch, or old English garden would be like enclosing it in a practical joke so cruel as to wound its most sacred sensibilities. Quite like proffering Uncle Sam himself a cardinal's hat and cloak for daily use, or forcing him to wear his own beaver with the uniform of a French field marshal.

"What *is* an American garden? I never heard of such a thing," asked Mrs. Jenks-Smith, the good-natured chatelaine of the new show place, The Bluffs, on the river-bank, to which Chris has transferred his talent. I told her that I used the term in relation to my bit of garden ground framed in the hillside woods, of which it had originally been a part; that it was to be itself, and not distorted into a feeble

imitation of the classic gardens of other days and times; that I would not have it tricked out with the wearisome, formal, tartlike beds that caused Bacon to groan, even if the cost did not make such a thing impossible for commuters of moderate means. The last reason was within her comprehension.

"I know such things are very expensive," she continued, with a sigh. "You wouldn't believe what our Italian garden cost, with digging out and filling in. My dear, we had to fill up thirteen feet deep in one spot, and piping the water for the pools, and after that the engine to run the fountain, and the electric plant to light up at night. For of course the trees are so young yet that there's no shade, and it's perfectly impossible to go out there in the daytime. And it was so thoughtless too in our landscapist, this season he had yellow flowers that close at night put in one of the most conspicuous places, and so some of the best effects are spoiled.

"I think I shall have to coax your husband next season to fit us up with a list of night-blooming things. I suppose he'd be reasonable to a neighbour. By the way, my dear, has it occurred to you what a grand advertisement for him it would be to have a good showy Italian garden on this hillside and his name and



business address on a rustic sign just below? It can be seen a mile off from the cars.

"Garden wouldn't match the house? Neither did ours, but we put on a whole new outside all stucco, you know, and the Prince who visited us last summer said he only had *to close his eyes* to think himself in Italy."

Verily, of such trials as these are calls composed; and I have to keep my temper and not say a word of what rises to my lips, but she would not have understood if I had, poor soul, and so I let her clatter on.

"Not but all those old flowers that you've had growing for ages down yonder have come in fashion again. Yes, isn't it strange they're quite in the swing, and those hollyhock roots that are scattered everywhere would cost a lot if you tried to replace them.

"Why, child, nature and all that stuff that you and the doctor always thought so much about and spent so much time over has come right in since you've been away. There is a princess or a duchess or somebody (anyway her name's in an almanac—a patent medicine, I suppose, but I don't remember what she took it for), and she lives in Germany and is named Elizabeth, and she's written a book about

her garden, and it made such things the rage. I read it all through, thinking I'd get a great many swagger points, but I didn't, that is, not on gardening; but she was so *chic*, just did everything she wanted to and never got rattled, and her house ran itself, except giving out the sausages, and she only looked at them. Her husband didn't count for much more than furniture, for he liked cabbages and wouldn't dance, so how could he? But the children were so useful—always said something bright at the right time. But then, she had an unusual bringing-up and said her prayers in French while her mother went to parties, so you'd expect she'd be different.

“Now you'll be right in it and not thought so queer as once. And as for birds, bird study's all the rage. I've stopped wearing feathers anyway until the excitement dies down. We've stopped driving birds out of the fruit, and put up boxes to draw them. They won't come in them, though, because your father says the rooms aren't separate and the openings draw a draft through. Though I call that going a little too far, as if birds that fly all day in the air can't stand a draft at night. In the spring when we return here I'm going to have a bird class, and a professor to take us out and point out the birds.

"It's awfully nice, my dear, much easier than giving a garden party, no trouble, no fuss, managed like a Cook's tour in Europe. He tells you everything you ought to see, so you don't have to think, you know. I went once this year across the river where I was visiting. There were twenty ladies in *such* becoming outing costumes, and *such* a delicious lunch, served quite in the woods, my dear. When we were eating we saw a quail! Yes, with its feathers on and all. Did you ever know anything so appropriate?"

"We learned two other birds besides,—a blue Jane, and the other was a red-eyed virago" [vireo]. "I remembered the name as *so* appropriate because the bird sang or scolded, I don't know which you would call it, all the time we were lunching."

As I think of that well-meaning, awful woman I nearly choke, and it is a relief to hear Delia creaking upstairs with my luncheon, which, as father has gone across country on a consultation, I am going to have spread on the window seat as of old when it rained and I was housed.



## VI

### A RAINY DAY

#### AFTERNOON

*October 31* (afternoon). I have already declared that I am about to try the joyous uncertainty of an American Garden. I desire the most flowers at the least cost, as befits the frugal wife of a commuter. Flowers for the table, flowers to go to town with Evan and whisper home to him as he sits in his office. Flowers for village brides, for the children, and for church festivals, and flowers to make the silent journeys from the hospital, that some must take, less dreary for those who follow them.

I know what I may expect and what I must not. I do not seek to duplicate Kew Garden on the side lawn, or to start an elaborate scheme and endeavour to copy in a few years what has taken generations of old-world growth to produce; for like the copy of an old master the imitation garden must lack the freedom of touch of the original, and before time has mellowed it, the unrest that is in a sense

one of our moulding forces will have pushed the mimic garden into other hands before it is even ripe. But any one may have an American garden, and it is such as these alone that from their simplicity and the love born of their making may be kept from generation to generation.

\* \* \* \* \*

However simple this garden of mine is to be, I must see its shaping before I begin even to plant my bulbs, or confusion will be my portion. A little mistake now may mean a year's delay.

O my Garden of Dreams! do not vanish when I am ready to embody you. This morning father gave me mother's garden journal from the little trunk under the eaves. To-night is Hallow-e'en! Who knows but if I sit here and look out over the leafless garden that was, that a vision of the new will come from between the morocco covers?

This quiet rain is very soothing to my impatience, and the little splashes that drop from the eaves to the piazza roof below with first a single and then a double drip, as the gutter is more or less full, seem to say, *Wait, wait, wait, Patience, patience, patience*, in a coaxing way.

A fair amount of damp and rain is rather good for

me, otherwise my spirits keep so volatile that they would often lead my body a sad chase if it were always sunny weather.

In spite of the delay in planting, this day is a perfect boon, ministering to me in the same degree as does fresh air, a drink of water, or sleep at other times.

It is also a pleasure to be in the attic again. One may marry and leave, and life seems wholly changed, but a room remains the same, year in and year out. The furniture consists of a hammock, divers trunks and chests, one an odd little affair from which the journals came, covered with the mottled skin of the hair seal, the key to which father wears on his chain, an ample and antique haircloth lounge, two shabby but hospitable chairs, a cupboard, and an old library table that makes up in drawers and pigeonholes for what it lacks in varnish. At first the drawers are obstinate and decline to open. Here in one are papers of seeds and, of all things, a string of Dan's hickory-nut beads with my initial cut on the biggest or king bead, as we used to call it. Truly, I am growing old!

There is a peculiar odour in this attic on rainy days that is as much a part of it as the smell of the hickory logs in the stove, the familiar furniture,



and the view from the window. During the past two years when I have closed my eyes, led by memory I have gone from room to room of the rambling house, and trodden every inch of the home soil from the path beneath the Mother Tree in the garden to the farther side of the field toward the bars where the wild apple blossoms make a rosy wall. When I arrived at the attic, the room and the odour always came together, — the pungent, waxy smell of wasps!

To-day, in addition to wasps and wood smoke, a third tincture is added, — wet dogs! Bluff is here as a matter of course, and owing to his long hair and affectionate disposition, his fragrance is the most in evidence of the five. It has been very amusing to watch Bluff, for his perturbation of mind as to whether he should follow father or me is singular. The first week he bounced wildly hither and thither as if he had lost his wits, not being able to decide what to do; but during the past few days he has adhered to an evidently thought-out plan of following the Stanhope in the morning and staying with me in the afternoon, that is, unless I then go out also, in which case he continues to follow until he begins to lag, and we stop and pull him into the gig, where he lies

blissfully content at my feet, occasionally giving my shoes a furtive and affectionate lick as he used to the birds he retrieved.

Pat, the wire-haired terrier, was a six-weeks puppy when I went away. He had been given to father by a dog breeder in the next village, in an outburst of gratitude for a little bit of deft surgery that he had done in the goodness of his heart for a pet dog which the man loved with the intensity that some rough natures feel for dumb animals. There was no veterinary surgeon in the neighbourhood, and father was always willing to aid animals where his knowledge was applicable, regardless of professional criticism, though he would not accept fees for such services.

The natural result had been that there was never a dearth of animals about the place. I have always counted from one to half a dozen dogs at my heels since babyhood, and it was invariably a small dog with a blanket pinned on shawl fashion that rode in my little carriage instead of the orthodox doll.

It was not to be expected that Pat should remember me, and in truth he did not. Bluff, however, had evidently told him all the facts of the case and impressed him in my favour; for he is now

continually sneaking away from Tim, with whom he has always lived at the stable, and nosing me out. Then when I am found, he stands with his body drawn backward, one ear cocked and the other lopping over, a grin on his homely, hairy face, as with a sort of twinkle of the eye he gives a few short barks, as much as to say, "Did you think you could hide from such a thing as a red-haired Irish terrier by the name of Pat?"

He is a respecter of dog law, however, and never ventures to lie on my feet when Bluff is by. Seniority rules in dog-land, where the oldest resident, be he great or small, strong or feeble, quarrelsome or easy-going, is King and the final authority on matters of etiquette. No one disputes his rule, that is, no full-grown dog of gentlemanly instincts; of course the gambols of puppies do not count. Sedate old dogs always tolerate them, sometimes administering a very mild cuff when awakened from after-dinner naps by having their ears chewed by the restless pups. But quite as often they sit blinking and gratified with the antics, wearing very much the same expression as a big human whose hair is pulled and mouth pried open by a rollicking pink-fisted baby.

Bluff's field companion, Lark, though only half his age, is lying almost under the stove; his soft white



coat lightly touched with black is in a sad condition, being thickly matted with burrs.

He forgot himself last evening and his dignity as a bird-dog, to go out with some farmers and their clever mongrel curs with whom he was acquainted, on a coon hunt. The poor fellow didn't even get a sniff at the coon, but brought home half the burrs and sticktights this side of the charcoal camp, making a nice bit of work for me; for as soon as he is rested, I must get him in shape again with the aid of an oily comb. Then Tim can wash him, but Tim is too rough with a comb. You mustn't lunge at the silky coat of a beautiful Gordon setter with the same vigorous swish that is used to curry a horse.

The last two dogs of the group are twins, young fox hounds of something under a year, and full of promise. They have good bone, and are coated in white and tan with a shading of black that brings out their points. Their drooping ears are well set, and their eyes of lustrous softness seem to follow every movement that I make. This is their first visit to the attic and its rainy-day comfort, so they are lying humbly on the outside of the stove circle as befits newcomers.

They belong to Evan and me, having been sent to welcome us on our return by a countryman of his in

a southern state who keeps quite a pack and does cross-country hunting. Such fox hunting as we have in the back country here is an annual combination of sport and dire necessity. When the red foxes of the heavily brushed lowlands that divide the hills grow aggressive with keen autumn appetite and haunt the chicken yards, then the sporting farmers and a few others who have energy and good legs and lungs set out with dogs and guns, drive to the point nearest the holes, tie up, then take to their feet; and when the dogs, a mixture of rabbit dogs, coon curs, and a half dozen real hounds, have started the fox, the men join the chase afoot, finally shooting the fox when it is cornered.

I'm afraid that it will be a long time before Evan can be brought to this style of hunting; for shooting a fox is a crime in England, where it is considered more sportsmanlike to let the dogs rend it. But in this rough and tumble region of rock ledges and gullies, cross-country riding is an impossibility, and so we take the shortest cut to the end to rid ourselves, or at least keep down the prowlers. The Humane Society once urged father to introduce the custom of trapping instead, as it expressed it, of "teaching one animal to chase another"; but somehow it was very unpopular, the foxes wouldn't be



caught, and all that the people accomplished was to catch each other's dogs, who went hunting on their own account.

Be this as it may, Bugle and Tally-ho have become intelligent members of the family in a short time, and made their first trip up two flights of stairs in a very creditable manner without undue bumping. How they will go down is another matter. If they hesitate, Bluff will probably push them, for he gave both Lark and Pat their first lessons in stair climbing.

The clouds are breaking away, and I think my mind is also clearing as regards my garden. I will let it keep its inheritance. The Mother Tree shall be its keynote.

From these two windows I gain not only a bird's-eye view of the stretch of our own land, once a farm lying a little aside the top of one of a series of sloping hills, but also its relation to the surrounding country.

The house stands higher than the road, from which it is divided by some great elms, clusters of shrubs, and a bit of grass. This bank is kept from falling into the road by a wall, the stones of which are hidden by a tangle of honeysuckle. At the north a driveway to the stable makes the division from a strip of woodland from which the underbrush has been



trimmed. This wood straggles in a half circle toward west and south, out into a hillside pasture. Back of the house is the vegetable garden plotted in neat squares, edged with fruit bushes and trees, on the farther side of which lie the long tangled beds of mother's hardy flowers.

These beds start at the Mother Tree at the north-west corner. On the right the higher ground makes a sort of wall, against which honeysuckle has been let to run wild. On the left the ground is level. The walk falls gently with the curve of the land until it stops abruptly at what was once a strawberry bed, but is now a flat bit of grass perhaps fifty feet square, beyond which is the wild land, only broken by the old cart track and a meandering cowpath that threads through hemlocks, birches, and cedars to a disused bar gate.

Behind the apple tree, screening it from the stable, is a stiff arbour made picturesque by sturdy climbing roses that have been long unpruned. One thing is certain, the hardy beds are in a charming spot, with a high background on one side for the taller plants, and open a lovely vista from the seat under the tree and down over the fields. This much shall remain,—the great clumps of herbaceous flowers transplanted, thinned out and alcoved by

shrubs making a sort of cloister walk from the past through the present to the future.

How everything material and spiritual, if it is well rounded, groups itself into the mystic three. Past, present, and future. God, nature, man. Father, mother, child.

Ah, it is shaping, my Garden of Dreams! The eye of the garden shall be the sundial, that bit from Evan's past blending with mine.

Though I dislike a set straight garden above all things, Evan says that a bit of formality often clarifies wildness and gives it focus, so some beds of summer flowers around the sundial, with grass left between for paths, will make a restful break in the view. Beyond, we might continue a plant-edged walk in the wake of the cowpath quite down to the old bars, and turn them into a stile. However I must not plan too fast, but leave beyond the dial to Evan. That is the future part of the dream.

Mother wrote in her garden journal, now open in my lap, during the first year of her marriage, "David has had a seat made under the sweet apple tree and a walk running from it to the strawberry bed. I shall plant my flowers on either side both for convenience and to frame path and view as well. If I may plant ten or fifteen feet every year, I shall be

content, for the garden should be a pleasure, not a burden."

Dear mother barely reached the strawberries in those five years, but in spite of godmother's fifty pounds I too must be careful about expansion; for, as Evan says, it isn't the first outlay of strength or money that will upset us, but the fixed charges, while father jokingly adds that the cause of much physical and all mental disease is "biting off more than one can chew." How I shall have to set my teeth and quell my garden appetite! The garden will be so much more lovable continued as it began. New things and places are so terribly lonely. Fortunately, after all, there is but one suitable spot hereabout for a garden, and that is where it now is.

How blessed I am in having the responsibility and temptation of choice removed from me! I might break loose and be ruined by visionary schemes. Heredities may be horrible ghoulis things if they are bad, but when good, surely nothing can equal them. Imagine how terrifying it would be if we had to decide the beginnings of things for ourselves: as to what race we should belong, what sex, and all that, instead of placidly coming out of unconsciousness to find it all arranged! Then suppose falling in love and going away with one's husband were not a



custom all over the world, how strange it would be!

It is growing dusky in among the rafters, but the Garden of Dreams is every moment growing more distinct to my waking vision. To-night Evan must put it all down on paper for me, so that I shall not forget or make mistakes. What is that noise? Really, I can imagine that I see strange shapes moving among the rafters. The dogs are all alert.—Ah! only the telephone bell in the hall.

\* \* \* \* \*

Evan has just called me to say that he has arranged to stay at home all day to-morrow! We have agreed not to use the long-distance line except for emergencies, such as his being unexpectedly detained in town over night, for it is so expensive. But he knew how I have been longing to have him here for a week day, so that we might realize everything again, and decide the garden plan, and he would not keep me waiting to know of it for even an hour.

It is quite dark now when he comes home, so we carry a flash lantern when he takes his after-dinner cigar walk, that we may neither run into trees nor fall into the new violet frame while we tell of the

day's work. Oh, the joy of the telling, when every commonest detail means so much!

\* \* \* \* \*

Really, I must be careful what I say, or rather sing, in the presence of these dogs; for a moment ago I gave vent to my feelings of joy in a bit of a song that was between a cheer and a yodel, and those two hounds first raised their heads and bayed as if it was night, and the full moon shining in their kennel, then dashed about the attic at full cry. Next Lark took it up. Bluff tried to copy until he choked, and Pat yelped.

Delia the waitress immediately appeared with a white, scared face, out of breath from running upstairs, saying that in the old country such keening always meant death.

Hardly had she disappeared when Martha Corkle the decorous, knocked, begged pardon, but the sound of the hounds had given her such a turn she'd nearly dropped the soup kettle, and it made her feel more settled and at home than anything since she came. From that moment Bugle and Tally-ho never lacked food, but, on the other hand, any dog mischief that was done in Delia's precinct was laid to their charge.

Tim is coming up the road with the great wagon and two big boxes, one long and one square. What can they be? The sundial, of course. Pedestal and top. For though it left before we did, being freight, it was delayed.

To-morrow Evan will be here, and we will have a festival and set the dial; that is, if we can agree upon the place, and it is good weather. Ah, there is a red streak in the west, and it is widening. It is almost train time. I will drive down for Evan myself, and tell him that our talisman has come.



## VII

### A BIRTHDAY BREAKFAST

*November 1.* Why has no one written a November rhapsody with plenty of lilt and swing? The poets who are moved at all by this month seem only stirred to lamentation, giving us year end and "melancholy days" remarks, thereby showing that theory is stronger than observation among the rhyming brotherhood, or else that they have chronic indigestion and no gardens to stimulate them.

Of course I do not know what November might mean to some one living away from his kind without love, in a cheerless house, lacking adequate means of heating or light, with no bath tub, and a well low from summer droughts, the sort of being whose intelligence dries away in autumn like the leaves, and whose breath of life merely flickers half dormant until the spring sun forces it to quicken in spite of itself.

The strange part of it is that so many city folk associate this state of woodchuck existence with the real

country life, whereas the intelligent country life, if it is lived and not merely toyed with in an amateurish manner, is a full, sparkling, strenuous course, calling for a more inventive brain and greater activity than that of the city in proportion as its satisfaction is greater. The difference is that in the city at best one lives the life of others, the life of the shop, the street, the crowd, while in the country one must live one's own life. A selfish, warped, narrow life, some say? Doubtless it might be; but if one has a home to keep, a husband weaving his web daily to and fro, and a country doctor, vibrating with sympathies of many lives, for a father, the pulse can never beat slow nor the heart grow cold.

I am daily realizing that it is a liberal education of both heart and head simply to be Evan's wife and my father's daughter. Father's private means, though small comparatively, enable him to keep abreast of outside affairs and the newest methods of his profession, so that he can do the best possible for his poorest patient, regardless of fees or criticism, thus carrying comfort and hope miles beyond the usual limited circuit when controlled by mere pay.

The saying that "shoemaker's children lack shoes" is simply a criticism of the relations between the children and their cobbler parent. The parental

attitude toward his trade evidently was not such as to make it interesting in his children's eyes, otherwise they would not only have thought shoes desirable, but have learned to make them.

Father's attitude toward his profession has always made it seem to me like the highest expression of the religion of humanity. To do the highest duty amid the scenes in which his life is set from lonely farm to the hovels of factory and brick-yard workers in the town, the healer of the body must also at need become the soother and strengthener of the soul. Was it not this revelation of spiritualized humanity that the Master preached and practised when he cleansed the lepers, bade Lazarus come forth, and comforted the dying thief with the positive promise of things beyond?

I think also that a certain knowledge of the processes of natural law, so that the facts of it come to one unconsciously and as a matter of course, prevents many shocks and jars that would otherwise meet a woman on entering the world that lies outside of the protecting doors of home. While a knowledge of the evil of breaking these laws as seen by the results, even in one little hospital, must make one's relations to the race more sane and sound.

Surely the country life is not as wholly com-



pounded of vegetation as the city dweller imagines. The cockney who thinks that he has summed up the essence of torpidity when he speaks of people who "vegetate in the country," simply illustrates his own ignorance and that he does not even know the life history of a turnip. For, taking the term literally, few things live more hurried and pushing lives than vegetables.

Vegetables are chiefly articles upon which the very life of the world depends; they do a great deal of work, and do it in private—a method of which most people have no conception, as not to live in public is to them the equivalent of death. Also to be a successful vegetable requires great energy; for not only must it work hard during the growing season, keeping its health and digestion in order often on scanty and variable rations, but it must provide, either by seed or the storing up in bulb, tuber, or rootstock, enough strength to insure its further existence.

\* \* \* \* \*

To return to November and its praise; mine is conclusive, being both material and sentimental, and stated in a few words. To-day has been one of the happiest days of my life, and it is November

first. True, Aunt Lot surprised us by coming in by the evening train, Reverend Jabez being now located at Centreville, thirty miles off, to get some winter flannels that she left packed away and offer me advice as to household management. But she has not damaged the day, for father has kindly lured her into his study; she merely acted as a sort of nightcap under whose influence, together with the result of an entire day out of doors, Evan and I crept somnolently into our den to sit in the big armchair in front of the wood fire, and whisper about things that could be perfectly well spoken aloud; but to make people tiptoe and whisper is Aunt Lot's effect upon every one.

"Why are we sitting here, instead of entertaining your Aunt Lot?" Evan asked contentedly, without making any effort to move.

"Because we are rude and perfectly frank heathens. We don't care to see her, for she wasn't nice about our being married, and so we do not pretend we do. We do not care a bit because the roof of the parsonage pantry leaked and spoiled her season's jam and jelly; we don't care that the 'four youngest' are badly disciplined and a trial; instead, we feel very sorry for *them*.

"Then she is sure to have speeches to make

about my duty to you, quite forgetting that in her wrath two years ago she summed you up as 'one of those foreign adventurers.' Yet I suppose I must go in," I said dubiously.

But I didn't go. Evan said it would be undutiful to him.

I wonder if she and the Reverend Jabez ever sit in the same chair in front of the fire! Evan says they probably have an oil stove, and of course no one would care to sit by that!

\* \* \* \* \*

The day began for me at half past six o'clock. Not that I got up then. I merely roused sufficiently to go over to the window-seat and see if the weather promised well.

It has been an opalescent day. When I looked out this morning, the opal was dull with barely a flush; everything was a mysterious pearly gray. Season, location, time, equally veiled by the fog that remained to tell of yesterday's downpour. One thing, however, this fog surely indicated,—that the weather was still mild, as a cold northwest wind would have swept the world dry, while the first thing that the window revealed would have been the top of the bare gray maples that bound us on



the lower side of the hill. The silence was complete, not even the splash of a drop of water or a ripple in the sea of fog. Suddenly the sun, only clear of the horizon, burned solidly through the mist, a fire opal whose glints of green, scarlet, yellow, and purple were caught by every leafless twig and woven in a filmy tissue that covered the grass.

All day yesterday a flock of despondent robins took shelter in the honeysuckles of the porch and in the hemlock hedge. The old birds were silent, the young males, however, occasionally giving a call or trying a few notes, as it were, to cheer themselves; but it was a sad autumnal sound with a sort of pibroch wail to it.

This morning however, they were all darting about across the lawn, and one, close above the window, confided to my ear quite four bars of an advance spring song.

How we are all more or less creatures of Sun, Shadow, and Imagination, impressed or depressed by weather! As the musical robin flew to join his mates, I remembered that it was to be a holiday with Evan at home, and the consequent agreement to disagree between Exact Time and Breakfast, so I curled up comfortably in bed again, not intend-

ing to doze, but merely realize the luxurious state of things. This enjoyment of an occasional late breakfast is one of the joys of the commuter and his wife which is denied the blasé beings who always breakfast in winter at eight or nine. As for spring and summer mornings, who but a cripple could lie in bed?

In spite of my intention I fell asleep, for the next thing I remember, the tall clock down in the hall whirled and struck eight times, accompanied by the baying with which the hounds always answered its warning when within earshot. Evan was missing, while strange noises on the piazza at the back of the house whetted my naturally rampant curiosity, and made me dress in a very incoherent fashion and hurry downstairs.

Where was Evan? Father was at the breakfast table. Delia fluttered about in a conscious way, and as I entered the room, Evan dodged in at the opposite side through a long window, looking quite guilty and with marks of the soil on the knees of his knickerbockers, his feet, and hands: the latter he hid in the pockets of his coat. Then as I glanced at the table almost covered with flowers, I realized that it was my birthday, and that somebody had taken a long drive to the greenhouse in town while I was still sleeping,

and somebody else had a present that he was trying to conceal.

"Which am I to sit by for these?" I said, as I turned from the flowers to the two men, who looked expectant.

"Oh, I didn't go over on purpose, dear child," said father, quite innocently, drawing me down for his twenty-five kisses. "I often make my trip to the hospital early to take them unawares. It is well, you know, sometimes. Yes, to be sure, this is rather earlier than usual, but then, daughter, I wanted to have a longer day with my children at home."

Meanwhile Delia brought in the coffee biggin and lit the lamp (I make the coffee, Martha being too thoroughly steeped in English tea making to compass the mystery). Still Evan did not sit down, but fidgeted about by the window.

Seeking the cause, I too looked out, and there on the piazza was what at a glance seemed to be the stock in trade of a nurseryman, all arranged systematically. There were bags of bulbs, rows of prickly though leafless roses with their roots tied in balls of moss, topless herbaceous plants, only identifiable by their labels; a line of well-grown shrubs leaned against the house, their roots, also, protected with moss, while in the walk, quite safe and sound,



reposed the sundial. Evan had not only unpacked and sorted the modest supply of things I had ordered, but supplemented them by those which he knew we should need, and being slow of growth ought to be planted without delay.

Father and Evan are never so handsome or happy as when they have planned a surprise for me, and as they are doing this almost every day, you can easily judge of the personal appearance and temper of my two lovers without further description.

In order to give each his due I pushed over three chairs close together on one side of the table, and sat in the middle one myself.

When the second part of the breakfast should have appeared, a lull occurred, unnoticed at first, there was so much to talk about. However, as we all wished to go out, after a reasonable time I rang for Delia, who had disappeared, and told her to serve the steak.

She opened her mouth to speak, changed her mind, and went into the pantry, where I heard whispering. In a moment Martha Corkle appeared in the doorway, her hands clasped over a faultless white apron, her bosom heaving.

A shocked expression jarred her countenance as she saw us all in a bunch on one side of the table

as if blown there by a storm. I must acknowledge that we were not behaving in a conventional British breakfast manner. Evan had stuck roses in my hair, and I had put one in every buttonhole of his velveteen coat, which he wore over a sweater, while a single bud was tucked over father's nearest ear—a fact of which he was blissfully unconscious, as he gave Martha the kindly and fraternal smile with which he invariably greeted her over the top of his paper, having refrained from handshaking since the night of our arrival.

“The steak is gone, Mrs. Evan, stole and gone, ma'am, by what ways it isn't for me to say. It was as fine a cut as ever I've handled, leastwise in this 'ouse. Two and a quarter in weight, without the end that I always trims off for the soup stock, Mrs. Evan. It was there when I cast my eye through the ice-chest after last night's dinner; this mornin' it was gone.”

“Could the dogs have helped themselves to it?” suggested Evan, chuckling at Martha's perturbation. “You might have taken it out without thinking and left it on the table, you know,” he said to her. “I remember once long ago that you rowed a lot about my taking a cold fowl and a ham shank to make a feast for some boating chaps, and my

mother reminded you that we ate them the day before in a pie!"

"Mr. Evan, a sober woman doesn't so mistake herself twict. That was when I was but fresh widowed and my prospects gone, and I well remember how it turned me about. It was twenty years —"

"Yes, but now — and the meat, that is the question. Cook us some eggs, and we'll track the steak later."

"Mr. Evan, sir, I can't deal with eggs until I'm cleared of that steak." Then, lowering her voice, "I do think that terrier, Pat, is the likeliest to have ate it, though Delia says it was those hinnercent 'ounds." Mrs. Corkle spoke with unusual correctness for one of her class, only lapsing when under great excitement.

"Mrs. Evan, ma'am, in my 'umble opinion, Pat is the only one of the dogs tricky enough to make way with meat and dish besides," she added, as a convincing argument.

"The dish!" I cried. "No dog would take the dish."

"Yes, Mrs. Evan, the dish is gone, a plate of one of the old kitchen set, of whom there's but few left, with a blue picture drawn out on it."



"Steak gone, plate, picture?" queried father, suddenly emerging from behind his paper and dropping it, while a flush struggling with a half guilty, half confused expression crossed his face.

"Well, Barbara, that is, you see — the fact is — I took that steak last night, and forgot to replace it. I've been visiting that poor Baker woman who is so run down and has a cough. You know her, Barbara; she used to sew here sometimes — but born a lady, and with the sensitiveness of one. She needs meat. Cheap slops and medicine won't build her up; but she is too poor to buy it, and it would offend her if I offered her money or ordered meat direct from the butcher.

"Last night as I was going out I looked in the ice-chest for some little knick-knack that I could carry her as a home product, you know — quite a different thing, I take it, from food purchased on purpose. The steak was exactly the thing she needed, — would last her three days; and that old blue plate she was sure to recognize as ours, so I took them together, and forgot to mention it or buy another steak. You see, my dear, you understand?"

Of course *I* did, of course Martha Corkle did not; but appreciating a man's property rights in his own ice-chest and contents, she retreated, technically if

not entirely satisfied, and sent us in irreproachable poached eggs, and the dish of toasted bacon that together with kidneys always makes us forget her shortcomings in coffee, and the awful duck-on-a-rock bread she perpetrates. This bread is of the consistency of clay, and is called a "cottage loaf." You can't slice it; the native whittles it up with his knife as one does a pencil. At present we live on toast, the basis supplied by an itinerant baker. Later, I shall doubtless get up my courage to ask her to take lessons of Mrs. Mullins, an old ex-cook.

The commuter's wife should have a hen rampant as her coat of arms, and adopt it as her patron saint. I swear daily gratitude to this commonplace and songless bird, — for, given eggs, my household need not go breakfastless either to town or to hospital. Both father and Evan are not only satisfied but eager for eggs at breakfast and other odd times. They may be cooked in any of a dozen ways, or at a pinch not cooked at all, but shaken up in a deft way with a few other ingredients. If a man regards eggs seriously, there is no need for him to run to the train breakfastless, leaving wife or maids in a state of exhaustion, one having stayed awake half the night to wake the other. A late unsavory breakfast is never pardonable, for fruit needs no cooking, and good cof-



fee, a cereal, hot toast, and eggs "à l'infinity" can be as well gathered together in half an hour as in half a day. You see, a country doctor's daughter has a good chance to learn the ways of ministering to the physical needs of a man who must always be well fed, though often not lengthily.

The bacon and eggs had scarcely disappeared and father had begged a third cup of coffee in honour of my birthday, when there was a vigorous scratching at the back door. I had been wondering all the time what had become of the dogs, who usually were the first to take their places either under the table or beside the chairs of their favourites.

I could hear Tim outside, admonishing them and evidently trying to chide them into order, which was instantly departed from the moment the door opened. They entered like rockets with a flash of colour. Lark, Pat, and the hounds ran to me with every symptom of joy, Bluff alone crawling under the table with an evident desire to hide. Each dog had a red ribbon tied around his neck, from which hung a large pasteboard heart, bearing a birthday greeting and a quotation, something of the penny valentine order, appropriate to, if somewhat derisive of, gardening.

One by one, much to the relief of the dogs, I



gathered in the trophies. Stringing them on my arm as I used to the hoops of wonderful paper flowers that were used as favours at the dancing class cotillions that vexed my youthful spirits. I called Bluff to yield his ribbon, but he would not come out.

Father commanded him in an unmistakable voice, and then he crawled grovelling to his feet, as if in abject terror, the cardboard heart chewed to pulp, in his effort to get rid of it.

"I believe he thinks the dangling thing some sort of a punishment for an unknown crime," said father. "Once when he was a year or two old, I tied a quail about his neck to punish him for eating some game he should have retrieved, and I believe the old fellow remembers it. Untie the ribbon, Barbara, and see what he will do."

The moment the bow was loosened, I tossed the whole necklet across the room, out of sight. Bluff sat up still trembling and looked about, then with two joyful barks, gave me his usual caress, the veriest scrap of a lick on the nose, and with self-respect restored, began to coax for toast.

By this time the sun was shining bright and strong above the maples, and the air blowing through the door that the dogs had burst open was

full of unexpected softness. Father and Evan disappeared each to his lair, to return simultaneously armed with pipe and tobacco pouch, which promised me two outdoor companions. For these beloved men instinctively avoid saturating the indoor air with pipe smoke, knowing without a word from me that a woman of sensitive organization has the nose of a hunting-dog.

Then we three strolled down toward the long walk to take the first step toward capturing the Garden of Dreams, that I might live my life in it. A song sparrow sang merrily, a bluebird purled away from the Mother Tree, the soft bright air bore the fragrance of Russian violets, and a bit of the tangle was gay with the hardy pompon chrysanthemums, tawny, red, yellow, pink, and white. My heart beat joyously, for love held me by either hand, and before me there was work to be done, and work is life. Still it is the first day of November! Fie upon you, melancholy autumn poets!

## VIII

### SETTING THE SUNDIAL

*November 1 (continued).* Last night I told Evan my plan of turning the old strawberry bed into a bit of formal garden, and he agreed that it would be a natural resting place for the eye in its journey from the seat under the apple tree down the walk and across the fields.

He emended the somewhat crooked design that I had traced on a slate found in the attic desk, and made me a fascinating water-colour sketch in which the strawberry bed appeared as a small level lawn in the centre of which stood the sundial acting as the hub to a large, wheel-shaped flower bed, or rather, group of beds, as the wide spokes, each of a different but harmonizing colour, were separated by narrow grass walks. A similar walk circled the spokes and was bounded in turn by a circular bed that might be called the tire of the wheel, and divided the grass walk into four in order that one might get to the centre



without walking through the outer bed. Four graceful wing-shaped beds filled the corners of the grass plot, which by actual measurement proved to be forty feet square. This plateau was on three sides enough higher than the surrounding ground to allow an arbitrary grass slope of two feet, with a couple of steps where the long walk joined it.

Without suggesting what plants should be used, — that is to be settled on some dreary day in midwinter when the first seed catalogue appears, bringing its tantalizing mirage of possibilities, — Evan washed in a colour scheme that he knew would satisfy my rather savage taste, and make this formal bit a blaze of light without the aid of a single “foliage plant.” For it is really astonishing how few colours are inharmonious when they are profusely massed and have green for a background.

One thing we decided about my Garden of the Sun, as Evan calls this formal bit, because it stands out in the open entirely without shelter. It is to contain only the perishable summer flowers, really flowers of the sun, and fit companions of the sundial. Gorgeous blossoms that come into being in June after the hardy roses have vanished, and glow and blaze until they fairly bloom themselves to death, before the frost touches them.

Of these flowers some are annuals, and others tender perennials or so-called florists' flowers that it is always a mistake to mix with bulbs or hardy perennials, for in the early season they are overpowered, and in their turn choke the hardier plants, exhausting the goodness from the soil by their rank growth.

As for the spring bulbs, I do not like them in set beds, each of a kind, and arranged in stripes or figures, any more than I do the formal beds of foliage plants. Grown in this way, as soon as the bulbs are out of bloom they must be replaced, or the space will look ragged and unsightly. This does away with the natural seasons of the garden. I think that one of the greatest charms of nature to women is that she is, like ourselves, a creature of moods, phases, seasons, and not always equally radiant.

Her wild garden has its spring, summer, autumn, and winter seasons, one waxing as another wanes. I think the cultivated garden should follow the wild plan, and while it must yield flowers in some part during the whole growing season, it ought not to be coerced and stuffed like *pâté geese* and every bed expected to be in full bloom at all times.

Besides, this constant pulling up and replanting entails labour not within the power of the com-

muter's wife, who, if she is wise, plans as far as possible for the permanent, so if she is obliged to neglect her flowers for a time, garden baldness will not result.

Evan says that if gardening is to be my relaxation and a pleasure, I must pursue *it*, but be very careful that it does not get the upper hand and pursue me, for he has seen this turning of tables not only cause the downfall of many gardens, but of country homes as well.

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If, a few days ago, Cris had put the sand where he was directed, I should have planted my bulbs in the wrong place. During the delay Evan discovered that the grassy stretch outside the study and windows of our den, where father tramps to and fro and smokes when he is thinking, looked bare, and something was needed to shield the foundation of the house.

This is a dry and sheltered nook, and an ideal location for bulbs, if they are planted well forward of the path and drip-line of the eaves. Evan has marked out two curving beds that follow the line of the path that goes to the rear door, and I am massing all my bulbs in them, — daffodils, narcissus, hya-



cinths, tall late tulips, the golden banded auratum, pure white madonna (*candidum*), and pink and crimson spotted Japan lilies. I shall plant them in groups, not rows, according to height rather than colour, so that by scattering some portulacca seed in June, the ground will be covered beneath the tall stalks of the later flowers, and we shall have colour under the windows from April until October. There are no plants more healthy, sturdily brilliant in bloom, and unlikely to disappoint than the bulb tribe.

These are the only two flower beds to be allowed out of strict garden limits, as we have decided that all the other decorations grouped about the house must be tufts of eulalia, various shrubs, and groups of scillas, daffodils, peonies, and iris set in the grass. The older shrubs we have in plenty, great masses of lilacs, syringas, and snowballs filling every corner and overarching the walk.

Our ancestors were aided by their usual common sense regarding economy of labour, when they gathered their little home gardens in a corner, often fencing them in from the rest of the land. Here the flowers could be considered as a whole, be loved, tended, watered, and protected from insect enemies without waste of energy.

Upon this same principle I must collect my flower

family under one roof, so to speak, keeping them in such order that I may not only enjoy them freely, but minister easily to their needs quite out of the range of highway criticism. Not that I object to being seen weeding, watering, tying, and insectiding in a perspiring and collarless condition, but I do not wish to be pounced upon by every patient that calls and be expected to take them into my sanctuary, there to prowl and despoil me of garden privacy or flowers after the custom of the idly curious. It is something of a responsibility of course to be one's own gardener, but an infinite satisfaction withal to feel that the making and even the marring is within one's own grasp. That is, as far as things agricultural are ever within the power of a mere human. For as a humbling and God-fearing occupation, none can exceed the gardener's. Mother Earth has ways of trying and proving the temper or lack of it that cannot be surpassed for variety.

As I look back over the years that I have watched garden processes, and sown and gathered my little crop of flowers, it seems that I should now know enough to keep clear of cultural sins both of omission and commission. Yet when I realize all the things that are uncontrollable, I turn pagan and am inclined to make a series of shrubby grottos to har-

bour the deities of Sun, Rain, and Seasonable Weather, so that I may secretly propitiate them with offerings. It was a woman gardener who said feelingly, "Paul may plant, but if Apollos declines to water, what can one do about it?"

In these days, however, all well-conducted dwellers in the country have artesian wells and wind-mills, and are thereby able, up to a certain point, by means of a diamond spray sprinkler, to sneeze in the face of so important a person as even Apollos himself.

Of course we have one of these wells, both for outdoor convenience and because father has been trying for many years to convince the community that neighbourliness does not require them to drink each other's drainage. This they do inevitably on the village and river side of the hills, where wells and cesspools alternate with great regularity. Surely the country life is the healthiest in the world, otherwise the rank and file of people who live it would never survive the liberties they take with themselves!

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This morning when father, Evan, and I, followed by Tim and Bertle, arrived at the garden a



further surprise was ambushed behind the rose arbour, in the shape of two men from the florist over in town of whom father had bought my birthday flowers.

"You see, Barbara," said Evan, shaking hands with himself behind his back, a manner he has of expressing satisfaction, "people always call in extra help at a 'house-raisin',' so I thought that I would do the same at this 'garden digging'; for if your beds are shaped now, you can in your mind's eye plant and replant, until when spring comes everything will be decided to your satisfaction."

I laughed aloud and clapped my hands at this new outbreak of one of Evan's strong traits; for the dear fellow had only a few moments before warned me that I could expect to do very little until spring, at the very time that he was providing men with stakes, measures, and lines to lay out the garden without delay.

Making a noise when I am pleased is another of my savage traits. Animals do it; the dogs bay with pleasure when invited for an unexpected walk. When good luck came to Toomai of the Elephants, he sat out in the night and thumped a tom-tom in pure joy. Civilization is mostly silent in happiness, feeling doubtless that at least feigned indifference

is expected of it. I often wonder whether we gain or lose by being civilized. It is so much less complicated to be a savage.

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The next consideration was the location of the sundial, for a hole must be dug and a rough foundation of stones, rubble, and cement laid before it could be set.

Fortunately the strawberry bed had been carefully levelled in its youth; the ashes used as a top dressing, drawing white clover to fill the place of the departed berries, promised very respectable turf, that by a careful weeding out in spring and raking in of fresh seed would serve quite well. After Evan had driven the central stake Bertle set to work with his shovel, advised and admonished by Tim, whose dialect Scotch must have seemed a weird language to his Danish ears.

Meanwhile Evan and I strolled up and down the long walk rather perplexed how to proceed, while father surrounded by dogs watched us from his seat under the tree, and the two extras stood at "rest arms."

The borders, about six feet in width, were a hopeless jungle of hardy plants interspersed at intervals

with shrubs and tall bushes of the older roses such as Magna Charta and Jacqueminot. Some of these met over the path and partly barred the way. At this season of course the hardy plants could be distinguished only by their leaves, and being herbaceous, any night a hard frost might destroy even this clue.

There was a broad band of hollyhocks too well placed against the honeysuckle bank to be disturbed, straggling helter-skelter were foxgloves, Canterbury bells, larkspurs, phloxes, sweet William, columbines, white anemone Japonica still in bloom in company with monkshood, hardy coreopsis, evening primroses, honesty, and sunflowers, while the autumnal growth of white, yellow, and red day and tiger lilies and scarlet oriental poppies was distinguishable.

After several turns up and down in a brown study, Evan threw back his head and cried: "I have it! I will have the men grub up all these plants with the exception of the roses and shrubs and put them on the walk, work over the beds thoroughly, and dig in good old manure from that heap in the field. Then the plants can be reset neither in a jungle nor in stiff lines, but in groups of a kind between the shrubs, which really, when



properly trimmed, will make a series of alcoves to break the awkwardness of straight lines. Some shrubs are too old and must come out or be replaced, and others, like the great syringas, lilacs, and snowballs, can be allowed to meet over the walk and may be cut out to form natural arches. This I will manage myself. What do you think of my scheme, Madam Commuter? Doesn't it keep the old and yet put it in a tangible, workable shape without breaking any of the canons and laws of my craft?"

I said that it was charming and suited me exactly, but did not add that it was precisely what I myself had planned yesterday in the attic and sketched on the reverse side of the old slate. It is a great mistake to collapse the lovable little self-conceits of men, for they are of a wholly different quality from egotism. Besides, to have told Evan that his plan was "piper's news" or that "great minds think alike" would have deprived him of the pleasure of pleasing me. Poor Aunt Lot had this fatal quality of forestalling surprises and caused me to lock up the characteristic for future avoidance in my brain cabinet.

Then Evan called the men, and the digging and sorting began. It will take them at least a whole



GREAT SYRINGA BUSHES MEET OVER THE WALK

GREAT SYRINGA BUSHES MEET OVER THE WALK





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week to restore these hardy beds to order, but luckily the "extras" are a birthday gift and do not have to be recorded and extracted, or I should say subtracted, from godmother's fifty pounds. Though really I suppose I should credit the garden account with them, all the same, if we are to keep track of what it costs. But why keep a garden account and reckon the cost of pure joy? Is it not cheap at any price?

But, on the other hand, if I do not keep the realizing sense of cost before me, I may be tempted some day to write a delusive book upon how to run a country home, horse and cow inclusive, on ten dollars a week, supply a family of ten with vegetables grown in a city plot, or give minute instructions as to the way a cripple may support himself by raising roses for market from cuttings obtained from withered bouquets, in a greenhouse glazed with castaway photograph plates and heated by a kerosene lamp!

I may not be wholly sane in my regard for money. In childhood a dollar did not mean a hundred cents, but twenty packets of flower-seeds; ten cents, a clump of pansies, a verbena, or a small geranium; while twenty-five cents stood for a heliotrope, a Fuchsia, or a tea-rose in forced and conse-



quently hectic bloom. Even now money never seems an actuality unless reckoned by its products, merely being according to its volume,—so much food, so many plants, dogs, books, or a coveted bit of land or a horse, consequently a commodity not to be hoarded but to be immediately sent out to fulfil its destiny. For as long as you keep money it yields nothing but worry, the current rate of interest being simply beneath contempt. On the other hand, you buy dogs and you buy food; one eats the other, there is no waste, while satisfaction and good company is the result. Also you buy seeds and manure; the seeds eat the manure, and flowers are the results. Is not this true economy?

Evan shakes his head at my theories, and yet when I corner him, he confesses that he has somewhat the same feeling and that the ideal condition to him would be to work for pure love of it, never thinking of money, but simply by putting the hand in the pocket always finding the sum necessary to pay for the article purchased.

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This morning as we walked to and fro, hatless and absorbing the wonderfully balmy air that father said

was a reprieve granted to autumn by summer in honour of my birthday, we crossed the open square and followed the line of the cart track down the field among the trees, until it wound in and out like a cowpath.

"We might," I suggested, "use this cart track as a walk through this short stretch of smooth ground and end it where the bushes and trees begin, continuing the beds of hardy flowers beside it. Some day perhaps we will have this old wood lot ploughed up and cultivated."

"Cultivated? No," said Evan, as if an inspiration had seized him, pointing over the half-dozen acres where the children of the ancient wood in the shape of second growth hemlock, maples, a few beeches and red oaks mingled with dogwood, cornel, bayberry, sweet fern, and hazel bushes, and the dry yellow fronds of the cinnamon and bleached hay-scented ferns grew amid a maze of seeded asters and goldenrods that still showed here and there a fresh spray of yellow. "No, this shall be your wild garden. A strip of a made path here until it curves under those hemlocks, then merely a grass trail of a lawn mower's width running where you will, and to be varied according to mood, until it reaches the bars where we will have a bench and

stile. Ferns there are already in plenty, and we can bring fresh roots home from every back-country trip we take. The wild things will never mope and starve in these surroundings; so we need not cultivate, but merely adjust ourselves to the land."

"Yes, and the spring hole with the mossy cask around it, where the cows used to drink down by the bars, we might use for a lily pool and have Japan iris and native water plants in the surrounding muddy ground. Oh, Evan, you angel, for a long time I've suspected you of having nice, strong, practical, magic wings folded away under your coat. This thought opens possibilities not even shadowed in my Garden of Dreams."

"It is for this and the wherewithal to make your dreams come true that I am here instead of in that older garden overseas. No, don't look distressed, sweetheart; for after all, a man's wife is his home and kindred."

Then father came up, wondering what we were discovering either in each other or in what, to unilluminated eyes, seemed only a ragged wood lot, brown with November's smoke tints.

When we had explained that the Garden of Dreams was to begin at the "Mother Tree" and end quite out of sight in a maze of wilderness, his



face was strangely lighted, and putting an arm around my waist and Evan's shoulder, he drew us together, saying, "Children, your lives, I believe, will be a long walk through the garden of your affections, and your old father thanks God that he is allowed to walk even a small part of it with you."

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The hardy roses and shrubs that Evan had bought also as a birthday gift to supplement those we already had, have been banked up in the vegetable garden until the borders are rearranged. Of course we take a risk in planting things so late. October is a better time; but if we have a close snowy winter, there is little danger, and we shall put straw jackets on the roses until they are established. On the other hand, if one waits to plant hardy things until spring, the ground may be late in thawing, and a whole season's bloom lost.

How delightfully the damp earth around the plant roots smelled when Evan unpacked them this morning. I think I must have a tinge of poor Peter Schmidt's love of the soil, irrespective of what it produces, in my nature, for the various earth odours all have a separate tale to tell, and

the leaf mould of the woods bears a wholly different fragrance from that of the soil under pasture turf, or the breath that the garden gives off in great sighs of relief when it is relaxed and refreshed by a summer shower.

This happy birthday has held two sensations not in the planning and planting scheme. When we were sorting the bulbs, the hounds carried off the bag of snowdrops, and after worrying it, ate a portion of its contents. Without looking in either Dodoens's or Gerarde's "Herbal" for the medicinal properties of snowdrops, I now know that they give puppies severe colic. Fortunately Bugle and Tally-ho did not eat many, and Evan secured the rest and has bedded them in a spot unknown to me, so that some early spring day I may go out and be surprised by finding them.

I also have planted a surprise for Evan in the grass bank at the foot of the honeysuckle tangle, a spot where the sun lies warmest in March,—half a dozen tufts of yellow primroses and cowslips taken from the Somerset garden and smuggled home in a box of moss deep in a trunk cover. If they thrive, he shall have a bank of them in time, for I saved plenty of seed.

The second happening was more serious. The

sundial was to be placed early in the afternoon with some little bits of sentiment, by way of dedication. The foundation was completed, and the shaft, a simple, rather graceful vase-shaped column, set in position. Martha came out, and looked solemnly on at a respectful distance, taking no notice of the somewhat crookedly admiring glances of Tim; for Martha is not unattractive, having good hair and a portly freshness not seen among our farming women of fifty or thereabouts.

Father and Evan were busy with compass and level; but though the sun shone brightly, the shadow cast by the quaintly wrought brass finger would not fall in the right place. Alack! the difficulty could not be adjusted; for owing to differences in latitude, an English-born sundial cannot tell New England time.

Father laughed mischievously as he rallied Evan upon the inadaptability of the race to which he was the exception that merely went to prove the rule. Evan did not laugh, but as he glanced at me, we mutually recognized each other's right of birth, and the dial will stand as a safeguard to remind us to respect each other's patriotism.

Meanwhile, Martha Corkle gave a suspicious sniff, and remarked, "Crossin' seas don't change the



'eart," while Tim forgot himself and indiscreetly clapped her on the back, saying apologetically, "Who'd ken the puir dumb stane 'ud be sa obstinate?" a proceeding she resented by stalking into the house.

However, the dial is set, and will add a meaning to the garden of the sun that shall surround it. Mother, who went away in the long ago, I'm so happy to-night, that I am sure you are very near. I seem to feel your arms, and I know that you also understand.

## IX

### CHIEFLY DOMESTIC

*November 8.* This has been a week of rush, wherein shovels, men, shrubs, shears, garden lines, and mysterious calculations have whirled before my eyes. In spite of our determination to thin out and readjust the old stock of shrubs and hardy plants, only one of the long borders is completed, the other being, after two years of comparative neglect, such a tangle of indistinguishable roots that we are leaving it as an experiment, thinking that it may give us some new hybrids of old flowers, or at least yield some startling groupings and combinations of colour that will outvie mere neatness.

Every day I grow more and more grateful for the things that have been. If mother had not cared for gardening, I might have spent restless years in groping before I knew that I wanted a garden, cramping my mind and body in a city apartment, or else stifling equally in some newly made suburb. Treeless made-country is, I think,

even more arid and monotonous than the city streets. I simply shudder at the awfulness of new places, where a level onion field perhaps, having survived its usefulness and sunk into weedy slumber, awakes with a start so find a trolley whizzing down the highway to the market town. Straightway it is dissected, and offered in building plots of the "Why pay rent? Build your home on easy terms" order.

One can readily tell what these hot little gardens will be; for even though the witch's cauldron period has passed, there are other stock floral ornaments for small lawns, the coleus anchor and the weeping purple beech, a small tree that owes its lachrymose appearance to having branches grafted on upside down, so that eventually they grovel in the dirt. The strange thing is that on a nearby cross-road an acre or two of virgin soil with a dozen good trees may often be had at the same price as the arid lot.

"But," says some willing though gardenless woman, "my parents did not have a garden for me to inherit. Am I therefore to be shut out of Eden? What am I to do?"

Do? Buy the ground on the cross-road with the trees, and make a garden with all possible



speed, that your children may be born with the love of outdoors in them.

At present there is a lull in our garden operations, and the soothing haze of burning leaves hides the bare outlines of the new beds around the sundial. The violet plants that are to yield Evan's buttonhole flowers all winter are comfortably settled in the frames in the sunny corner between stable and bank. An ordinary frame, with three sashes, such as we use for seeds in spring, will hold a hundred violet plants, and these, if carefully protected by mats from freezing, and well sunned to encourage bloom and keep out mould, will furnish my commuter with his daily flower until the out-door violets come in bloom, besides giving his wife many a handful of fragrance to put in the iridescent glass vase that stands on her desk-top for the harbouring of lovable flowers.

We bought the violet plants this year, but next season we shall grow our stock. The lilies-of-the-valley have spread wonderfully in my absence, and must have a thorough weeding and be thinned by having six-inch trenches cut through them before they are bedded with manure for the winter. We have always had glorious lilies because, in the face

of gardeners and tradition, mother planted them in sunny, rich soil instead of letting them starve and dwindle in the shade. They grow south from the apple tree thickly as the grass, their only limit being the amount of room we can give them.

Evan made a discovery early this morning when the dull red light of the sun, falling between the bare interlaced branches, drew traceries on the windows, and shot long rays of the gorgeous shifting hues of stained glass upon the floor, for the moment turning the plain frames into a latticed casement. He saw that such was the slope of the land that by cutting an opening through the thick maple branches, the garden would lie before us like a picture framed in leaves.

Then a second idea, born of the tree shadows, is a plan to replace the windows of the square shallow bay with latticed casements, and under them a low, broad window seat, from which we may enjoy the garden from afar.

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The morning after my birthday the inevitable conversation with Aunt Lot took place. Conversation? No, Interview is the word, — an Interview conducted on the parish visitor (inquisitor) lines.

She was evidently aggrieved because father had not confided to her the precise date of our home-coming. She wished to have been present to welcome us, after having vigorously upset the house from garret to cellar in the historic name of house-cleaning; and this topic furnished the opening text for the discourse.

"I'm sorry, very sorry, Barbara, that the fall cleaning was not done before you came, and with your father here alone for almost two months, everything must be in a shocking condition. When do you begin? I suppose you intend to have it over before Thanksgiving?"

"I'm not going to begin, Aunt Lot."

"Are you putting it off until spring? I think that's a risk."

"No, forever. Every room has its day for weekly cleaning, and there will be no need for an upset, as if we were fumigating after a contagious disease."

"Humph! and be sweeping and dusting all the time! You'll never manage it in the world, but I suppose that is one of your new English ideas."

"No, simply common sense, like taking a bath every morning, though I believe that there may still be people who prefer to save up and take a semi-



annual soak in pearline, the execution of which makes them weak for several days afterward."

At this she shifted the subject.

"I must say, Barbara, that I was surprised to hear that you were coming home to live. You know I've always held the opinion that there was no house large enough for two families. My brother, though easy-going in general, is most set in some things, and from what I have seen of your husband, I should say that he was not only set, but high spirited."

She had endeavoured to cross swords with Evan at the time of our marriage and had never forgiven him for declining to argue.

"Two families in one house? Surely, Aunt Lot, you do not practise what you preach; for you have gone into a house with another family, and a large one at that. This, however, is really one household, — a big house, the dearest father in the world, with a son and daughter to keep him young."

"Then, too," she continued, as if she had not heard, "you are beginning most extravagantly, — three women in the house and two men outside. In the old times I only had one woman, until your father got the notion of having the office door waited upon, and making patients send in their names

and come in turn, instead of leaving the door on the latch for people to walk in sociably when they pleased. No doubt, as he said, people did sometimes go and wait round just out of curiosity to see who was there, and somehow Miss Bache found that Mrs. Dennison had liver trouble that spotted her complexion, and mentioned it in sewing society, and her own husband's sister, not knowing she was ailing, felt grieved to hear it from a stranger.

"But I suppose you still expect to run wild as you did when a girl, never going in the kitchen except when you wanted something, and spending all your time either grubbing in the dirt or reading books that were not at all the thing for young women,—I never wasted my time in such idling,—or else listening to some impostor's tale over at the hospital, or crying over the funerals of ragged children that were much better dead. I hold three women sheer *extravagance*, and it's a woman's duty to surprise the kitchen at odd hours; otherwise how find things amiss?"

"Not extravagance, Aunt Lot,—coöperation, the only way in which twice two make five, and sometimes even six or seven; and as to finding things amiss, father always said we find what we look

for; consequently, as I don't wish to find things amiss, I shall never look for trouble. If we had taken a little place of our own with a horse, cow, and garden, we should have had to keep a maid and a man, should we not?"

"Certainly."

"And father must still have kept two maids and a man?"

"I suppose so."

"Then where is the extravagance of three women and two men when we live together?"

"That's not the way to look at it. When two families live in one house, it is that they may get on with less, else why do it?" she added triumphantly.

Poor Aunt Lot! she has always made of life a sort of combination bargain sale, a debit and credit account, with material loss and gain her only standard, at least until she married the Methodist minister; and then I verily believe the gain that tempted her was holding domestic authority over the motherless eight.

"I think you are mistaken," I said, swallowing my wrath; "that is the sort of family combination that fails and brings discredit upon the word. Coöperation is the having more of everything" (I was going



to say "love," but I cannot speak that word before Aunt Lot), — "home life, leisure, books, and all the material things to boot." I was hastening to explain also that Martha Corkle was an accident, a sort of after-thought in our plans, but before I could speak, Aunt Lot was again on the trail.

"The most objectionable feature about the house is that woman you've imported. She is a most offensive person. Last night when I went into the kitchen to chat with Delia and Eliza and ask them how they were satisfied with the change of things, — by the way, I think Eliza is greatly wounded and depressed at being set down from the cook's place after having done the marketing when your father was alone, to doing laundry and mere shift work and having no say so, and then, too, Delia appears as if she'd been crying, and wouldn't talk about her wedding, which I don't think looks well, — that woman, Martha Cockspur, stood all the time I was there and glowered at me as if I had intruded and had no right to go to the kitchen and speak to the help."

"Martha Corkle comes from a class of society where the servants stand when the mistress visits the kitchen, which she never does to discuss the members of her family," I said emphatically. "She was quite right; you forgot yourself, and you were intruding.

And now, if you please, we will talk of something else."

"I meant no offence, Barbara, I'm sure. I only thought it fair to warn you," she persisted. "You are young and impulsive and have no experience. You never had any responsibility before in your life, and now what you'll do for jellies, preserves, and canned things this winter I can't imagine. There is a very worthy woman in our town who puts up such things for sale. I might order some for you if you like. I suppose you'll be putting in a great many improvements, — a hardwood floor in the best parlour, perhaps, to set off those new rugs and heavy plush curtains. You must have had a good many wedding presents I've never seen."

"Thank you, but I do not need preserves and such things. We all prefer fresh fruit and vegetables; out of the growing season something can always be bought at the market in town. I do not see why I should make any change except little by little to renew worn-out things; for father, as you see, has had a lovely rosy paper put in this room and given me all the dear old mahogany that was mother's. New brass beds? No; I detest them. I like the feeling of being surrounded and having my toes tucked in instead of poking them between the bars as a canary does his beak.

"As to hardwood floors, father has them under ban, for in a year he has traced two compound leg fractures, a broken arm, collar bone, and an obstinate case of water on the knee, to polished floors. Besides, very soon there won't be any best parlour. It's to be our den, with plants and only the lightest of frilly muslins at the windows and fresh matting under the rugs. In fact, I'm going to banish all carpets as soon as possible and have thickly lined matting and rugs everywhere."

"It's plain that you are set in your ways already, and don't wish my advice or value it," said Aunt Lot finally, rising bonnet in hand as if to go, quite in a huff, "but one thing more I must free my mind of. You'll find your husband will get many a hard cold coming up in those hot cars on stormy winter nights, besides losing business by never meeting people in the evening."

"Evan belongs to a club where he has a room that he can use when weather or necessity requires," I answered, boiling so internally that I am afraid my voice shook.

"Humph! I shouldn't have expected that he would have laid plans to deliberately stay away from you so soon."

"Stop, Aunt Lot! The plan was father's, and



Evan only consented to it because I urged it. No woman should try to live the country life if she is hysterical and makes her husband a train-slave. Now, if you please, this talk must stop, and never be renewed. I hear Tim bringing round the horse."

As I went to help her with her bag and the packages containing her various belongings, I saw that she hung back and evidently had something further on her mind. To bring the really painful visit to an end, I asked if I could do anything for her. She hesitated, and then whispered,

"*Would* you show me your new clothes? I've a great deal to fix over. I didn't buy a trousseau, as your Uncle Jabez was changing his charge at the time of our wedding. Have you anything tasteful in hats? Being at the head of a parish, and going to teas, cake-sales, funerals, and experience meetings, I'm called upon for quite a change."

The relief was almost too sudden. At last a subject that could not breed strife! I showed her my modest store, — a London tailor suit, some dainty waists, an outing gown, an evening dress, a fur jacket, and the hats. Hats have always been one of my weaknesses. You can express so much in a hat; it often calls for flowers, and it requires very few stitches. Other sewing seems such a waste

of time, the cutting of good cloth into more or less fantastic shapes, and then pricking it full of holes with a needle.

Poor soul! how longingly she handled the head-gear, picked and puffed out the bows and flowers, and laid each down with a sigh, lingering over a girl's soft Alpine felt whose only decoration was a band and buckle. Aunt Lot is rather pretty outside, but in a faded sort of way, as if the fire of her constant and, as she thinks, righteous, indignation had had its searing effect.

She hung over one puffy little toque of mouse-gray velvet with a big pink rose set squarely in front, murmuring her desire to try it on, as, if it became her, I might let her copy it, of course in cheaper material! An inspiration! I immediately offered to give the thing to her, promising to add strings to make it bonnet-like, and to veil the brightness of the rose with black tulle, — all the work of a few minutes.

She accepted the gift with alacrity that bore a resemblance to pleasure, but resented the strings as too heating, also the hiding of the rose, saying that Jabez liked pink.

How strange it is that the only effort of so many well-meaning women to keep young is by dressing in the way that most accentuates their wrinkles, con-

cealing the gray locks that soften the face, by either covering the forehead with a sort of scrambled egg arrangement of brown curls or mounting the horror of a fat artificial pompadour!

The doorstep was reached at last, and the packages stowed in the rockaway; I breathed more freely, but no, there was a last word, and it was not mine. With her foot on the step, Aunt Lot turned to say, —

“Now, Barbara, when Delia marries at Christmas, you’ll doubtless have difficulty in getting a waitress. This commuting business, with early breakfast and late dinner, and the dishes to wash up at goodness knows what hours, isn’t popular, and you’ll have trouble. But if you’ll let me, I can get you a good young woman from our town. She is not very strong and she has never lived out, so she wouldn’t expect high wages, and I might keep her a few weeks without pay to help me out and counsel and train her for you.”

At this juncture from some cause known only to Tim, the horse grew restive, and I had just sufficient self-control left to cross the piazza, enter the house, and close the door without banging it; then I flew up to the attic, followed by Bluff, who had been in hiding behind of the study sofa, as he had never



forgiven Aunt Lot for once beating him with her parasol, his only whipping as far as I knew, when he had given her a too affectionate greeting on her return from making state calls.

Once in my retreat, I closed the door and lay on the old lounge panting; I remained there, saying things for quite a time, and finally recovered enough to take my outlook seat at the dormer window.

Oh, the soothing whisper of outdoors even when the voice comes from leafless trees having a clearer, more incisive tone than that of dense leafage, and the pines and spruces come forward and keep up a full accompaniment like the lapping of waves that is unheard at an earlier season.

As I looked out I realized a feature that I had never before noticed. The evergreens, so old that they had lost all Christmas-tree stiffness and taken easy attitudes, had been so planted that as the elms and maples lost their leaves, they seemed to disappear into the draperies of these sturdy trees, and be replaced by them. So that on hill, grass slope, or flanking the walk the furry green of white pines or the fretwork of spruce and hemlock barred out winter desolation, while the living green in the form of younger bird-sown seedlings of the old trees crosses the woody pasture until it blends with the

sombre tone of the native red cedars that gather round the bars.

Woman; you who have bought the bit of ground with trees on the cross-road, that your children may be born to country life, plant evergreens in the north for a windbreak and on the south for a pleasure to the eye. Not the new-fangled blue spruces, golden hemlocks fit only to be confined to the lawn as breeze-excluding ornaments, or the stunted firs of florist's catalogues, but the sturdy old forest trees that rear their heads laughing in the gale and grow mightily, white pines and the Scotch fir of ruddy bark, white and black spruce of long or clustering cones, graceful hemlock spruce, and the dwarfer balsam fir of fragrant breath.

These are the things of the garden of winter that none may spare, and they also become welcome havens to the birds that are brave enough to bear us company.

I was quite soothed by the prospect before me in combination with the warmth of Bluff's body, for he sat leaning against my knees with his chin resting in my hands and eyes fixed on my face. A knock on the door broke the spell.

*Enter Martha Corkle*, neat, respectful, but evidently labouring under excitement.

"Mrs. Evan, what ham I? You having told me never to take kitchen complaints to Mr. Evan, I'm obliged to ask you, and no disrespect intended, what I ham."

For a moment I thought she had lost her mind, then I realized that Aunt Lot's visit to the kitchen had probably created some sort of storm, and that Martha's query was a bit of the wreckage, so I waited for further information.

"Ham I 'ousekeeper with hauthority over the two maids, or only cook? and if but cook, does my word 'old in the kitchen?"

Shades of inherited service descending upon an overfree country, this was indeed a dilemma! I temporized from lack of ability to express in suitable words the entire liberty of the house servant. Perchance if Martha understood, she would be reasonable, for I simply would not have domestic broils.

"You are Martha Corkle, Mr. Evan's old nurse, of whom he thought so much that when he left his old home he brought you away with him. I knew that our ways are not yours, and I was afraid that you would be unhappy; but I did not want to disappoint the master by telling him so, and I thought that a familiar face might make it



seem more homelike here to him. In this country, unless it is a great household of many men and maids, we do not put one in authority over the others, for the mistress is the housekeeper.

"You are the cook, and it is your place to be motherly and make the kitchen pleasant to the others who are younger and have not the advantage of your training; but if they make you discomfort that you cannot avoid, tell me, and I will speak to them. What was the trouble to-day?"

"Tea, Mrs. Evan, tea and pins on my pastry board. Not but what the allowance is liberal enough and to spare for the extra cup that it makes a body feel homelike to draw when they so likes, but the quality. I stand by English breakfast as the wholesomest and most tasty, Eliza and Delia prefers rank oolong, which I hold puckers the stomach and coppers it.

"This morning you wrote the order for the grocer for so much tea, at so much a pound weight, without mention of the kind. I tells him breakfast, Delia says oolong. When I disputes her right, she says that two wants it, and over here the majority rules! and I want to know must I have my inwards coppered or drop tea?"

The situation was both comical and pathetic, for

in the selfishness of majority rule how often individuality as well as individual right is made to suffer.

"How about the pins?" I asked.

"It is this way. The others being through before me of an afternoon and at leisure for a couple of hours, and their room being overcool for sitting, bring their sewing to my kitchen, and instead of keeping it neat and together, Mrs. Evan, they scatters their needles and pins about reckless, yesterday leaving pins on the edge of the board itself where I was making those pa'tridge the doctor bagged, into a game pasty, and two pins rolled into the hupper crust, it being a mercy that they pointed up and I saw them. The blame of them would be to me, and yet I have no say-so to stop it."

My native spunk urged me to say that she had better return home if she was discontented, but then my Familiar Spirit who often talks with me and sometimes gives good advice, made a suggestion; for after all, there was reason under the grievance, and that is too often overlooked in kitchen matters. Surely the girls should have a place to sit and sew.

"Martha," I said, "there are many things that

I shall readjust and change, but I cannot do it at once. Let us both be patient and help each other for Mr. Evan's sake.

"You shall have your own allowance of breakfast tea, and the others their oolong, for they, also, have a right of choice; and to-morrow I will have the little storeroom out of the kitchen cleaned and fitted for a sitting room, with table, lamp, a spare sofa from upstairs, and, perhaps, a sewing-machine, and then it will be against the rule to have sewing in the kitchen. But if you still feel discontented in the spring, I'm sure Mr. Evan will send you home again."

"I'm not for goin' that far in complaints, Mrs. Evan," she replied, in evident horror at striking her colours or at implied desertion of one of "the family," even if only the youngest son. "And now that you understand me, Mrs. Evan, is consoln,' and I'll say no more, as the pins is to go."

*Exit Martha Corkle.*

The clumping made by her flat, stout, English shoes on the stairs had hardly ceased when it seemed to begin again. Was she returning?

No, Bluff gave the growl that announced a stranger, who knocked with masculine vigour.



*Enter Mrs. Mullins*, — a one-time cook, but now a portly Irish matron, owner of a smooth tongue, that lies comfortably and coaxes successfully, a cow, two pigs, numerous fowls, and an onion field, in addition to a husband and five daughters. In spite of being a perfectly healthy woman, she had come to father at diverse times with the symptoms of all the ordinary diseases at her tongue's end, of which same troubles she was miraculously cured by chalk powders and brown dough pills, so I went directly for her chief foible.

"Well, Mrs. Mullins, what is amiss with you to-day? Is the pain in your head or your heels? for you are too thrifty to leave home before dinner-time merely to make a call."

"And yer right and yer wrong, Miss Barbara, darlint; God forgive me, for Mrs. it is! I'm never the one for gallivantin' in the mornin' widout cause; but, all the same, the trouble's not mine, but another's, and as it's well-nigh noon, I'll make short words of it. It's Dalia. Your Dalia that has shook off her match and has asked me, she bein' ashamed to face it and expectin' reproaches, if you'll kape her on in her place, for she's entoiely out of the notion of marriage."

"Delia not going to be married! and her wedding

gown bought, and the date set for Christmas, after all the talk of the fine house Patsy's mother was to deed to them on the wedding day?"

"That same talk's the meat of the trouble entirely, — Dalia give out about the day and the house, Mrs. Doolan she smooled an' says, 'There's toime enough yet. Patsy's but a lad, only thirty-five come Easter next. Av course, and him my only son and me a widdy, when I bespoke Dalia for him' (for they do say it was the mother that fixed the match to plaze him, Patsy bein' too bashful), 'I give promise o' the house on the weddin' day,' givin' a big wink, 'but that same day is not yit set.'

"Dalia claimed she'd bring Mother Doolan round all so fine, and worked Patsy to backing her up, for as they'd been keepin' company, two years come Michaelmas, she'd the right of thinkin' of being settled, and settled now it is. It wor well before dark Hallowe'en when Patsy come creepin' up the lane wid Dalia, she laughin' and confident, well pleased wid herself, and castin' her black eyes around sassy like. But he wor unaisy, and all broken out on the face wid sweat, though a cool evenin'.

"Says I to my oldest daughter Kate, who was home, there bein' a strike in the shoeshop, 'Puttin' it

together wid the words the old woman spoke the day, they're a-walkin' reckless near home.' 'Look, mother, for the love o' heaven, they're a-goin' in! Dalia t'reatened to have it out, and there'll be music for sure.'

"And widout another word, us two, being o' wan moind, clipped out in the shed that commands Doolan's premises through a knot-hole that Katie's enlarged a bit for convaynience. But I hadn't got me best eye placed comfortable, — the doctor, bless him, knows well the trouble I had wid me off eye, — when something flew out o' Doolan's front door, dasht boy, and up the lane to the turnpoike.

"When I got me soight straight, I saw it was them three all a-sprintin' for dear loife. Patsy was a leadin', Dalia a-followin', givin' him her mind for outrunnin' her. Old Mrs. Doolan, a lashin' the air wid a big broom, was but a step in the rear.

"'But there'll be murther done,' says I to Katie, and we shlipt down the road behind the cedar bushes. In that we was dishappointed, for just before they all reached the turn, Dalia passed Patsy, givin' him a terrible cuff, and callin', 'Take that, ye quakin' bowl o' mush!' that he stumbled and fell into the ditch, from which Mrs. Doolan had him out in an eyewink, and was leadin' him home by the ear like a sthrayed pig.



“Not a word was spoke the noight, but come All Saints’ mornin’ I took up wid Mrs. Doolan goin’ to mass.

“‘Mrs. Mullins,’ says she, ‘will yer belayve me, Patsy’s that fond o’ me he can’t think o’ marriage, and he’s broke wid Dalia, but a nice farm he’ll get the day he does it, though he do claim the girl’s not born he’d look at along o’ me. Yer might ha’ heard him swearin’ it only lasht night.’

“‘Bad cess but I didn’t,’ thought I; but I said, ‘Sure the boy’s but a lad,’ to kape the peace, me pigsty a lappin’ a bit on her land, the same convayniencing me greatly.

“That night Patsy he come a-bawlin’ and prayin’ to me to coax Dalia to see him, and a-sayin’ he’d lave the old woman if Dalia’d make up; and I had fair to trap her at our house, she was that contrary.

“‘Dalia, darlint, whatever’ll I do? Have patience! the old woman won’t last forever,’ he playded, the tears streamin’ from him; ‘and if ye lave me, I’ll go drown for sure,’ he begged on his two knees.

“‘She’s long outlasted my notion for you,’ quoth Dalia, ‘and her dyin’ would change nothin’. There’s two buried in your grave already, and she’d be over-near the top for safety. I’ve got sense, thanks to you, Patsy Doolan, which is what I lacked before.’

And she walked out, and Patsy he got up from his two knees, and to kape his word went out and drowned hissself in drink before witnesses in Grogan's saloon."

Mrs. Mullins talked so rapidly, hurried by a keen relish of her subject, that I followed her with difficulty, divided between laughter and admiration of Delia's spirit. So when Mrs. Mullins creaked downstairs, she carried the tidings to the girl that, failing of being a bride, she might still be a waitress without reproach.

Having a healthy appetite, and no woman being within reach with whom I could discuss the morning's happenings, thereby magnifying their importance, I went in search of luncheon, and by the time it appeared, together with father, the only part of the trilogy of woes that seemed worth repeating was Mrs. Mullins's account of the failure of Delia's venture in real estate.

## X

### WINTER

#### THE GARDEN OF BOOKS

*December 3.* Winter has come in a single night, the picturesque winter of Christmas cards wrapped snugly in ermine robes and travelling to the jingle of sleigh bells. It is only occasionally that he travels in this guise, more often coming as gaunt Black Frost with the northwind for pace-maker, trampling the naked fields with mailed feet, freezing the very pith of the leafless trees, numbing the huddled birds as they glean seed in the furrows, and making us feel the hopeless cruelty of Nature's sterner moods when unassuaged by human kindness.

However fickle our climate may be, it is never monotonous, and so after three open, or at least snowless winters, to-morrow many sleighs will be let down from the lofts where they were fast sinking into Rip van Winkle sleep, while wolf skins and buffalo robes, the relics of a vanished tribe, will leave the camphor chests, and again see the light of day.



Night before last was the time of the "watch fires." The sun went down with the clear red afterglow that in summer usually indicates the coming of hot dry weather. The air in fact was warm, of the real Indian summer softness, such as often continues for many weeks after the killing frosts of middle November.

I am glad that the watch fires are still kept up. I remember being wakened, wrapped in a blanket, and taken out to light my first fire. Father himself started the custom, and I feared that it might have died out during my absence, with other signs of the seasons that add so much to country living.

All through the autumn, as the farmers cut the brush from meadow edges or cleared weeds and stubble from the corn-fields, fires would be seen at night, the leisure time they took for burning the rubbish. Oftentimes these fires were lighted, and being left to tend themselves, spread, doing much damage, or else a conflagration of house or barn was thought to be merely a brush fire, and so neighbourly aid was withheld.

For these reasons father had suggested that every one should gather his rubbish as usual, but wait to burn it until the first night of winter, when all the neighbourhood could be out and on the

watch to see and enjoy the bonfires that flickered from hill to hill quite out to the point that runs into the bay, and make a festival of "watching in" winter.

Evan and I went together to the hilltop well back of the house and woods, where Bertle had collected a grand pyre of stubble, shrub trimmings, and weed hay from the roadsides, all capped and held in place by pine and hemlock boughs that had been cut away in clearing the meandering cowpath that was to be the walk through our wild garden in the wood lot.

It was a beautiful night, the many voices coming from afar and the vivid flames lent an air of newness and mystery to familiar surroundings. Every time Evan stirred the pile with his fork, the landscape perspective changed, and now and then a weasel, a fox, or some other little night-prowling animal, startled from its lair, would dart across a streak of light, to be instantly swallowed by the darkness again.

Finally the last flicker died away; and when nothing remained but a glowing circle of embers that could do no harm in the middle of the ploughed field, we strolled slowly home, Evan with his coat on his arm, and I fanning my face which the fire had toasted, with my useful but rather dilapidated hat which had seen service as carrier for nuts or small

tufts of ebony spleenwort, pipsissewa, or partridge berry that from time to time I added to the little wild fernery that lives in the middle of the dinner table.

"Are you ready for winter?" asked Evan, who had been away for a few days' visit to an F. M. (an American title signifying Financial Mightiness) whose recent purchase of a tract of forest, field, and river was to be turned into a home park.

"Is any one ever ready to be shut in or see the friendly earth so seemingly dead? But if you mean have I done all the outdoor gardening that is possible before spring, I can certainly say that I have, and that I am ready for winter. The narcissus, Bermuda lilies, Roman hyacinths, early tulips, and freezias are all potted and buried in the cold frame, ready to be brought in succession as house plants. I've sown ounces, in fact quite half a pound of Shirley poppy seed in front of the hardy plants, the entire length of the walk on the way to the sun garden; the perennials have cedar bough windbrakes over them, the old roses are mulched with coarse litter, and the new ones are all bonneted with straw after the most approved fashion. The only thing remaining to be done when the ground freezes for good is to cover the bulbs outside the study windows.



"Then," said Evan, slyly, "I think I shall not be interfering with your garden operations if I bring home some plans to-morrow night and work over them here where I can be free from interruptions. Incidentally, I might spare a few hours of daylight to unpack my bachelor belongings, and get our books into winter quarters."

He knew exactly what I should say, or rather do, and he slipped around a tree that we were passing, thereby causing me to embrace it fervently in the dark, bumping my tip-tilted nose.

Ah, the joy of unexpected holidays! their ecstasy must be forever missing to the habitually leisure class. Even the dogs sniff the news in the air on the rare autumn field-days that father takes, and by the time he brings out his gun and examines stock and muzzle, they are running circling about in a frenzy of excitement.

Precisely this feeling possessed me when Evan said that he could do his planning here. Yet such a creature of contrariety am I, that I can imagine nothing more deadly to motive and affection than to have one's husband belong to the American branch of that pernicious institution known as "The Men who Stay at Home." The subtle art of being agreeable though unemployed in the technical sense

requires both heredity and greater preparation than most of the learned professions, and to be done well must be the outcome of an older and possibly more degenerate civilization than ours. For here, save in exceptional Newport-like communities, "The Man who Stays at Home" must, as far as male companionship goes, suffer the pangs of Robinson Crusoe loneliness, which does not improve his temper.

But it is pure joy to have Evan for a few precious days all to myself in the den, where I can sit in the window and watch him make his free-hand water-colour plans from the necessary but stiff scale drawings, knowing when he is satisfied by the way in which he rumples his hair, and when perplexed by his horseshoe scowl. There is something very interesting to me about an occasional horseshoe scowl, savouring as it does of the wild but satisfactory hero of Miss Edwards's "Barbara's History," one of my favourite novels.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yesterday morning the weather was gray and threatening. The lowlands were white with frost, and upon trying to uncover the frame to pick Evan's violets, I found the straw mats frozen to the glass;

an occasional snowflake drifted through the air, but with the motivelessness of a floating feather.

Bertle, who has also been a sailor and is wise in weather signs, predicted a storm, and suggested, as it was Saturday and there was little to do, that he should drive over to the sawmill for a supply of lumber from which during the next three months he is to construct and fashion new hotbed frames for the spring seeds, garden seats, plant-boxes to screen the piazza, and the framework for supporting the chicken wire upon which sweet peas, nasturtiums, and other summer vines are to be trained. By planning winter work for Bertle we can keep him the year through, and so be spared the uncertainty of looking up a new man every spring,—a trial from which many gardens and dispositions suffer.

By noon, when he returned with the first load, snow was falling in soft, irregular flakes that by three o'clock had grown finer and more persistent, while the wind was rising fast and the pines were swept to and fro by the unseen force.

Father had taken an all-day drive to Stony Hill for a consultation and must return in the face of the wind. The sudden change made me restless; I could neither sit still nor stay indoors: so buttoning myself into an ulster with a hood, I called the dogs and



started down the long walk to the path through the wood lot.

The dogs were wild with excitement which they expressed in different ways. Pat alternately tiptoed along and made bounds into the air. The hounds, to whom snow was a novelty, pawed and played with it, took great mouthfuls, then rolled and finally, when exhausted, sat down to rest, only to jump up again, surprised and disappointed at the inhospitable coldness under them. Lark started off, nose to ground, trying to unravel the crossed trails of many rabbits who, evidently surprised by the storm in their daytime forms on the wood edge, had thrown precaution aside and hurried helter-skelter to their holes. Bluff alone stayed close beside me, sniffing and glancing about apprehensively, his tail held close and motionless.

There was a great flocking of such birds as live with us at this season, and much chattering and commotion. Jays and nut-hatches were hurrying in from the oak woods to the shelter of the evergreens, robins sat in rows, humped and sullen, among the cedars. I could hear the plaintive voices of invisible bluebirds, various sparrow calls, the notes of cross-bill and goldfinch, while the occasional "keo-keo" of a distant red-tailed hawk made me feel that strange

elements were abroad, for such a chorus of alarm cries I had never heard save in the anxious nesting season.

In some places the snow was even and a couple of inches deep, in others there were tiny drifts, while the cowpath itself was almost bare. The seeded stalks of goldenrod, mullein, and the lattice-work of the wild grapevines took fantastic shapes from the clinging snow, above which the Christmas ferns emerged crisp and shining.

By the time I reached the end of the path at the bars and turned to go back, I began to realize the blinding power of snow, for both the fall and the wind had increased; night seemed to be coming, and I was almost obliged to grope my way. In crossing the sun garden I walked into the dial post, in turning aside from the apple tree, I found myself under the rose arbour on my way to the barn instead of near the house, so I continued on to put Pat and the hounds into their night quarters in the stable.

As I opened the door, half a dozen juncos flew in after me, and bunched half exhausted in the bottom of a hay-rack. I called Bertle and told him to open one of the ventilating windows in the hay-barn, on the side away from the wind, and there was also

shelter for the birds under the various sheds. Finally I struggled back to the house, surprised to find myself quite spent.

Martha Corkle was in a state of ill-concealed alarm, which made her head shake ominously, in spite of a painstaking dignity.

"Mrs. Evan," she whispered, when I went to the kitchen the more quickly to get a needed cup of tea, "Mrs. Evan, it's a mercy the 'ouse is well victualled and blankets and coals in plenty. The last time I saw a storm come up like this, I was but a girl, serving Mr. Evan's uncle in his shooting lodge in Scotland, to the which same place he had gone to keep Christmas.

"The snow came that deep that we were not dug out until Twelfth Night, and there were shepherds, sheep, and cattle being turned up at times until spring; the same, of course, being stiffened corpses, the thought making me fearful for the doctor and Timothy Saunders."

I laughingly told her that with the stout gray horses in a country of travelled roads, a few inches of snow meant no danger; nevertheless, I was relieved when, a little before six, father returned.

"I've known nothing like it except the great storm of '88," he said, stamping the snow from his



shoes, while the whistling wind nearly drowned his voice, "and this time yesterday you were sitting out on the porch, Barbara, and I was driving without an overcoat."

The telephone bell rang, blessed nuisance! Evan was detained in town, but would arrive at nine; we were not to wait dinner, and the storm was not yet bad at that end of the line. This comforting message was the last word the telephone uttered for five days.

At a quarter to ten Evan came home, snow hanging to his face, bearding it white as Santa Claus. After a bit of supper we all went to bed, feeling a strange sensation of suppressed excitement, for the wind was shrill as when keyed by a ship's rigging, in spite of the muffling snow that fell with a positive sifting sound. Bluff and Lark, who usually slept on the door mats in the lower hall, insisted upon coming upstairs, whining and fidgiting until in self-defence we let them in, when Lark crawled behind the lounge, and Bluff stretched himself beside my bed, whence he arose at intervals to lick my hand or nose as if in assurance of protection.

This morning there were none of the usual sounds of day. About these, however, the commuter troubles himself but little on Sunday. The dense

silence was more disturbing than positive sound and seemed to press upon the brain. I think the present experience has taught me an intense pity for the deaf, who in the midst of moving objects must perpetually feel this tenseness and pressure of silence.

Outside was a world of snow which was three feet deep on a level and everywhere billowed into fanciful drifts. There were no paths, no fences; one unbroken sheet stretched from the front door, covering bank-wall, and road, levelling them with the field beyond.

It was impossible to open the east door, so deeply was the snow heaped against it, and the dogs cowered and refused to go out, even by the back way, where the wind had left a bare spot.

Bertle had not appeared, and Tim with difficulty fought his way in, bringing the milk pails, and has remained here ever since. It was of no use to attempt the breaking of paths while it was still snowing, and an effort to free even the back stoop was as foolish as the proverbial task of sweeping the wind off the roof.

Father tried to call up the hospital, but the telephone was useless. The lack of church bells told the

plight of the village, and so we had a day of absolute and enforced rest in which to arrange and plant our indoor garden of books.

The one-time parlour across the hall from father's study and office had been developing (I suppose Aunt Lot would say degenerating) into a comfortable den for a month past.

The best chairs that for so many years had stood primly back against the wall were scattered about the room, their places taken by a continuous line of book-shelves of a height that left picture space above. The claw-footed mahogany table was drawn well into the bay and littered with books and magazines in a way that must have surprised it. A pair of scroll-ended mahogany sofas faced each other on either side of the fireplace, improvising a sort of ingle nook, their antique and inhospitable hair-cloth hidden by the bright, harmonious colours of some Mexican rugs. The north window was Evan's lair; an open bookcase jutted out on either side to form an alcove with a wide-topped desk between, while I had a somewhat similar nook by an odd, doorlike casement at one side of the fireplace. A great rug and a few big chairs made up the furniture, leaving plenty of room for 'living, moving, and having our being.' A woman educated by men



soon learns the importance of having standing room within as well as out of doors.

There are many things that make the account of the miracle of the loaves and fishes not only seem possible but quite an everyday affair, and the unpacking and rearranging of books is one of them.

The plants in my book garden, like those of the hardy beds, were jumbled together, regardless of size, colour, or season, and quite overflowed the space allotted them. Evan suggested that as in the outdoor garden, when pressed for room, we should dispense with most of the annuals, — the books of but a few months' bloom, which having served to brighten a brief period, have no lasting qualities, — and send them to the hospital, thus giving first place to the books of perennial delight and to the biennials, — those volumes that one turns to at least every other year. To this I agreed, until I found that opinion plays a large part in the hardiness of books, and that they cannot be as arbitrarily classified as flower seeds.

My little library was built up of three periods, childhood, girlhood, womanhood; or boyhood would have been a triter term for the first, as boys' books preponderated at this time. Strange, isn't it, that

sex should be asserted in books at a time when the readers are the most sexless, and then quite disappear as the readers themselves develop! Books are written for girls and boys, "The Boy's Own Book," "The Girl's Toymaker," but never "A Novel for a Woman," or "A History for a Man" appears.

The first period of reading stood by itself and ranged from Grimm's and Laboulaye's "Fairy Tales," "The Wilds of Africa," "Tommy Try and What He Did in Science," "Robinson Crusoe," an expurgated Gulliver, "Alice's Adventures" and "Hiawatha," from which I made a play wholly my own, to certain famous histories and biographies that may be read from childhood to old age, each reading yielding new meaning according to the development of the reader.

Girlhood began with Clarke's "Shakespeare's Heroines," Strickland's "Queens," "Ivanhoe," "The Pathfinder," and "Little Women," — a combination of the literary, martial, and domestic, that was much to my taste. Then for a long time history in all its branches, especially that of the Anglo-Saxon race, reigned supreme, and with it came folklore. In a single year, according to the dates written on the neat record book-plates father had given me, I became possessed of Brand's "Popular Antiquities,"



the convenient Bohn edition of the "Chronicles of Mathew of Westminster," "Florence of Worcester," "Roger de Hovenden," "Ingulph," and the "Venerable Bede," besides Plutarch's "Lives," and the ponderous volumes of Schoolcraft upon our own Indians, from whom I then fancied myself descended.

Natural history and the poetical side of nature came later. Figuiet's works and Emerson's "Trees and Shrubs of Massachusetts" hovered about my seventeenth birthday with a bevy of bird books. It had never before seemed any more necessary for me to locate the birds, with which I was wholly familiar and which were my field companions, and analyze them by means of books, than to search the town records for statistics concerning my neighbours whose habits and daily lives were open to me. The next year I met Thoreau quite informally, though he had always been within easy reach, like the near neighbour upon whom it is so easy to call that we put it off, and Wilson Flagg went with me to the attic on rainy summer days in guise of "Woods and Byways of New England," and its companion "Birds and Seasons," while Burroughs and Hamilton Gibson were as a pair of rose-coloured glasses through which I learned at once to differentiate and to beautify everyday things, though far back two books



belonging to mother had set this door ajar. They were both Michelet's "The Bird" and "The Ocean."

Then books on plants and gardening followed thick and fast, and I picked up a few inexpensive oddities at the book sales when I went with father, sometimes venturing to bid myself, — the "Flora Historica" of Phillips, two quaint volumes on the Three Seasons of the British Parterre being one of the results of my prowess; while the first book that Evan gave me was the rare North American Sylva of Michaux and Nuttall, with coloured plates.

As Evan began to sort and stack the books, I stood by in a state of increasing alarm as one favourite after another went to build up the pile of annuals. I saw the Rollo books and "The Wide, Wide World" depart without a sigh. I never cared for them except when I was rather feeble physically, as after whooping-cough or the mumps; but when "The Parent's Assistant" and Hooker's "Child's Book of Nature" followed, together with "The English Orphans," "Les Malheurs de Sophie," one of my early French books, "The Children's and the Schoolgirl's Garland" of Mrs. Kirkland, and "The Struggles and Triumphs of P. T. Barnum," a souvenir of a festive trip to the circus, I protested.

"Do you ever read these books?" quoth Evan, who was momentarily becoming aware that, according to the habit with book lovers, as far as the the shelf room was concerned we were expecting to have more than a cat in her skin.

"Of course I haven't recently."

"Do you ever expect to again?"

"I'm not sure — that is, I may wish to. I used to like them, and I do now, though I can't tell why."

"I will give you an idea," said Evan, as he saw my expression. "Range them along the attic shelves and call them the garden of remembrance, where you may stray for memory's sake, just as we keep in an odd corner of the outdoor garden some old-time flowers whose use is gone, whose beauty is questionable, and yet the remembrances they bring entitle them to life."

It was slow work, this arranging; for almost every volume had something to say or a reason to give why it should be planted in a particular nearby case. It was noon before we had more than made a beginning.

Then there was a temporary interruption caused by the appearance of a man who lived far up the road. He was first seen coming zig-zag along the stone fences steadying himself with a pole. He

disappeared twice in fifty yards from losing his footing and stepping into a drift, and when he finally reached the kitchen door he was exhausted, having been several hours in coming less than two miles. His quest was some milk for his baby, as of course the local pedler who usually supplied him had failed.

After he had rested and been fed with hot soup, Tim went to start him on his way back along a more direct line of fencing, while we ate our mid-day meal in unusual awestruck silence. Still the snow fell and the wind blew without cessation.

Every now and then a bird driven from cover by hunger, would be dashed against a window, and before night half a dozen such unfortunates had been fed and were resting in an open-work basket in the kitchen.

A sharp-shinned hawk, the wildest of its tribe perched for so long on the trellis of the porch that Evan had full time to sketch its half-defiant, half-cowed attitude.

Back to the den we went, and after the books were housed, then came the placing of the pictures. I had some Houbraken prints of Shakespeare, Chaucer, Spenser, etc., and my special pride, a beautiful copper engraving of Van Dyck's Charles the



First, with his war horse, a print full of light and brilliant blacks. Evan has a Rembrandt's Three Trees, Earlom's mezzotint fruit and flower pieces, two "Kit Kat" pictures by Kneller, of Dick Steele and Congreve in the same style as father's Dr. Garth of Dispensary fame, Tonson, the bookseller, an engraving of the two Tradescants, gardeners to Queen Elizabeth, a set of coloured prints of men of the Linnæan school, in which the head is as it were framed in an engraved oval. He has, besides, a dozen last-century prints, also coloured, of many famous gardens of the Thames, — Hampton Court, Vauxhall, Kew, Ranelegh, and St. James's Park; and lastly, the very apple of his eye, an engraving on copper representing Charles the Second with his spaniels in the gardens of the Duchess of Cleveland at Daune Court, while Rose the gardener is in the act of presenting the king with the first English-grown pine-apple.

At last all was arranged, the garden pictures making a harmonious frieze above the book-shelves. Only one gap remained; the broad panel over the mantelshelf was quite empty.

"Something will turn up, as usual," said Evan, shrugging his shoulders as we laughed at the omission, for we should have begun with filling this space.

"Some day I will have a portrait painted for this panel. It shall be of you, Barbara, in the garden with Bluff, your faithful squire, at your feet. Who shall the artists be? It will need three,—a portrait, an animal, and a flower painter."

"Meanwhile, take this," said father, crossing the hall, carrying a portrait in a plain Dutch oak frame, that had long hung over his study mantel.

"Linnæus! Are you really going to part with him?" I cried, in joyful amazement. "You angelic father! it is the one thing needful to complete the room. But our old shrine will be desolate."

"The truth is, Barbara, I've something to replace it. You know how long I've been collecting portraits of the men that were the founders of my profession, both medical and surgical, the Houbraken Harvey, Galen, Sydenham, Paré, and all the rest? After your Aunt Lot's marriage, I seized the opportunity to group them in one large frame, without being reproached for extravagance, thus putting these worthies in a house with many windows, as it were, where, being together, each may keep his separate point of view. But disliking to disturb anything your wish had placed, I let Linnæus keep his shrine, storing the prints close at hand in my office closet, until your return."

Dear father! the buying of the Linnæus portrait had been one of our booksale romances that had culminated in the Dodoen's "Herbal" and Evan. It happened on a dreary February day. Father was browsing along a line of dingy books in the auction room, scanning them closely in the dim light, when his foot struck against a picture-frame that rested on the floor, causing it to tip forward. A hasty glance at the face interested him, and he asked an attendant to move the frame into the light. It was the portrait of a man done in oils, life size, and a little more than waist length. The face was clear cut and alert, the head covered by a white wig that curled above the ears. A dark green coat with red collar opening slightly over a buff vest was finished at neck and wrist by lace frills. A glance told that the hands were beautifully painted, the flesh being firm and the colour true. The right hand, partly resting on a stand, was half closed over a few flowers, while the left was held palm out and half extended, as if in explanation. The background was quite dark, though a church spire could be distinguished at one side, and a festoon of ivy on the other.

"A fine piece of colour, and the face seems strangely familiar," said father, adjusting his "nearby" glasses. "What do they call him?"



“‘A Gentleman in a White Wig,’” I replied, on referring to the catalogue where half a dozen pictures and some prints were listed with the books.

“A true though certainly not very enlightening title,” mused father, still looking at the face with narrowed eyes. “Barbara, I believe this is no less than a portrait of Linnæus. Those are not decorative flowers, but botanical specimens, a wild rose and a spray of agrimony, toward which he is calling attention with his outstretched hand, possibly in lecturing. That steeple is of the church in whose manse garden he played when a boy. I’ll not say that it is an original painting, but probably a copy of some museum picture abroad, of which there may be fifty others floating about unrecognized. Still it is good, and bears a certain resemblance to prints that I have seen, and I’ve a mind to buy it.”

“Do, for I am simply in love with it,” I assented, “and Aunt Lot doesn’t squirm so much about pictures as over books. But I won’t believe it’s a copy. The brush marks are free and without a draggle or stumble. Who knows but it is a masterpiece gone astray? At any rate, we will christen it ‘Linnæus’ at once, and make a shrine for it over your study mantel, and always keep wild flowers under it.”

"First we must buy it, Bab the impetuous," laughed father, "and some one may realize its beauty and easily outbid us, for we have been a week in town, this is the fourth day of the sale, and my purse is pretty thoroughly purged."

But we bought it, there being only two other competitors, one a man of the buy-anything-cheap type, and the other a *real lady* collecting ancestors, who would doubtless have outbid us if her daughter had not checked her audibly by saying, "Don't, ma; you know we agreed to stick to the military line," and so Linnæus, was knocked down to us for the small sum of twenty dollars, when, as the auctioneer patronizingly assured us, "The frame alone is quite worth the money, being hand-carved Dutch oak!"

Now "Linnæus" has fitly come to preside over our garden of books, and I still believe that he is all my fancy imagined, and that one day he will be proved his real self, and it will be explained how he came to be travelling *incog.* as the "Gentleman with the White Wig."

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Toward four o'clock the storm lightened, but it was too late for road breaking. Then the wind

blew again, and more snow and nightfall came together. Two hearth-fires glowed, and father sat in his study and looked contentedly across the hall, silent save for a soliloquy on the contrariety of new-fangled notions when, after running his paper knife in a leisurely way as usual through the top pages of a magazine, he began to read and found the leaves were joined at the bottom.

8 P. M. Evan has been to the barn with Tim, and reports the sky clear and the stars bright, and promises that in the morning I shall ride on the snow plough that breaks the first road.

A crude implement this snow plough, merely a triangle of timber with a platform set midway, the horse being fastened by a whiffle-tree to one of the points. Ah, but I remember the excitement of it all, the buffeting and breaking the way through the trackless whiteness, and even the half-acid taste of the crisp snow I ate to quench my thirst. My face tingles already at the thought of it.

Lark and Bluff, however, were not happy. First they stretched before one fire, then the other, and finally took up their places in the hall, Bluff facing one way, and Lark the other, so that they could see both halves of the family and nothing might escape them; and I, too, sitting in the ingle nook,



can compass my two lovers with a single glance as I write half by firelight.

Dear garden of outdoors, I love you best! but as you vanish, then the door of the garden of books opens to me with its main roads, bypaths, and endless vistas, and I also rejoice at this. Do you realize, you happy, happy Barbara, what it is to have both gardens and both lovers?

## XI

### THE TERRIBLE TEMPTATION

*February 10.* Why is it that so many people think that charity consists in giving away merely what they cannot use instead of the article the recipient needs? For it often seems to me that in the eyes of the multitude, it is not until a thing becomes useless that they think of passing it on.

This miscellaneous unloading of trash upon the hospital reached such a pass at Christmas time that the managers, many of whom were leaving to winter in the city, appointed a Committee of One with Power, to handle the problem. I am It, and my name is Committee for the Reception of Donations Other than Money, — a title as long as the duties are various.

The old way had been to have the gifts sent to the Superintendent's office, thence being distributed at his discretion, or in the case of books, pictures etc., oftentimes to allow visitors themselves to do the giving.

Murmurs of the lack of tact displayed had often

reached father, but it was only recently that the extent of the abuse first appealed to me.

I was arranging some Christmas greens in the men's surgical ward, when a poor fellow, an engineer who had lost both legs through a railway collision, called me and said with grave face but keen humour twinkling in his hollow eyes:—

“Ma'am, isn't it funny how some well-meanin' folks like to grind a fellow when he's down,” and he pointed to a card hanging on the opposite wall, and to a book on the floor beside the cot. The picture was a flaming illuminated text hung by a ribbon. It read, “Arise, take up thy bed and walk!” The book was a sensational account of railway accidents!

The grim humour of the combination struck us both, and we laughed over it heartily as I confiscated book and text, the man telling father afterward that the cheer of the sympathetic laugh was the first thing that encouraged him to get well.

I bore the articles to the superintendent's office and there listened to a tale from his wife that amazed me. Not only were useless articles of furniture and clothing sent almost daily for which receipts and official thanks were expected, but unsuitable food arrived as well,—skim milk on the turn, soggy



potatoes, "jellies" that from stinginess with the sugar declined to jell, the last donation of all being a case of fermented fruits from the Lady of the Bluffs. Fruit kept so long that the tin cans had popped at both ends! together with some equally suspicious tins of deviled ham! This gift was accompanied by a violet-scented note saying, "If the fruit, a superior California grade, and quite expensive, is nicely and thoroughly cooked, and more sugar added, it will be a refreshing treat to our dear convalescents." Of course such food was destroyed and never given to the patients, but the Village Liar via the Emporium had started the tale that the Superintendent's family "fattened on the delicacies sent to the sick!" Shades of ptomaine poison! Was it not time to appoint a Committee of One with Power?

I have established a food quarantine in a little room off the hospital kitchen, and nothing unsuitable is allowed even to be received; while all other articles are collected in a loft where once a week I go to inspect and sort them, the useless things being left to accumulate. They will be scattered annually by a well-advertised "rummage sale," to which, if I know human nature, people will flock in order to see if they will recognize any of their neighbours'

goods. The proceeds will of course belong to the hospital.

The Village Liar will doubtless have plenty to say upon the subject. She sent fermented cabbages that were rejected yesterday. The Emporium must also be already bursting with news; but as the Emporium is treated by a natural herb doctor and the Village Liar is a Christian Scientist, I do not have to come in contact with them either for professional or social reasons.

These memoranda may seem out of place in my Garden Boke, but then, gardening isn't all earth, the growing of flowers, and the crushing of weeds; it is the developing of the soul and the body as well. As there are human beings whose very presence seems to bring God nearer, so there are others who by their nothingness send us the more gladly back to the companionship of the beasts and flowers of the field. Surely there is no greater garden for human-nature study than the flotsam and jetsam of the hospital.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two months of winter gone already! White winter is never dreary, for the trees are wreathed with snow flowers that bloom by day and night. On the shelf around the bay window of the den

where I am sitting, freezias, Roman hyacinths, pink and yellow oxalis, and cyclamen are in bloom, the delicate colour being enhanced by half a dozen medium-sized plants of the ubiquitous Boston fern (*Nephrolepis Bostoniensis*). This fern should be divided every spring and not allowed to grow too large, as the pots are then heavy to handle, and the fronds are less vigorous and perfect than with the smaller plants.

Now that we have this fern, there is no excuse for keeping the rubber plant, that abomination of stationary motion that would be quite as satisfactory if made out of zinc and painted.

I returned home too late to prepare anything except bulbs for my window garden this season, for pot plants bought of a florist and brought from greenhouse heat to the conditions of a living room soon grow feeble, and seldom adapt themselves to the new condition. From outdoors in is quite change enough to be overcome.

After all, I am quite sure that bulbs are by far the most satisfactory things for window culture. They may be brought from the frames in succession, and removed again to be dried off when out of flower, and what in nature is more pitiful than a pinched and starving house plant? — nothing



except the caged wild bird that, grown too feeble even to struggle, sits crouching on the perch, and with dimming eyes looks through the bars toward the sky.

I have led quite a virtuous and commendable existence these past months; in fact, ever since the great storm quenched, for the time being at least, the outward manifestation of my gardening passion and forced me indoors, face to face with the domestic occupations of a commuter's wife in a snowy winter. Now we are pruning the fruit trees by degrees, and the days are lengthening. Thirty more of them will bring hotbed making, and the garden is again beginning to lure me in thought. I've devoted a fair share of my days to my fellow-beings and the before-mentioned scanning of hospital donations. I've made personally and carefully certain concoctions that the sick but respectable poor, with traditions and pasts, associate with a self-respecting convalescence, and have taken my wares to the hospital for special cases. It has always been one of my pet amusements to watch people eat the things they enjoy, from children drooling over a lump of sugar upward. Mouths have so many different expressions; even Bluff's lips look dry and contracted when his meal

is of dog biscuits, and totally different from the abandon with which they linger over the leavings of kidney stew.

It is well worth a little effort to see parched, fevered lips moisten with expectancy when I take from my "hospital basket" the glass plate of lemon jelly or glacéed orange, seeded and parted in its natural divisions, sprinkled with sugar and frozen. The jelly, I know, would not be as palatable from a thick hospital saucer.

True, modern science questions the nutritiveness of many "sick-room messes" of our grandmother's day. Yet father thinks that there is such a thing as satisfying the mental side of an invalid's appetite, which some of the young doctors, learned in everything except the common-sense of experience, do not understand. For surely there are some nervous, homesick conditions, where a little home-made apple sauce is more reviving than a pint of correct and unpalatable peptonoids.

Besides this work, which I really like next best to sitting in the den with Evan, or gardening, I've done a little sewing in spite of my prejudice, and absolutely made holders for the kitchen, neat carpet cookies covered with ticking, binding them properly about the edges with turkey red after Aunt

Lot's habit, instead of hobgobbling them with shoe thread as my Familiar Spirit suggested. By the way, this "Familiar" is not of the guardian angel tribe, for it is frequently a suggester of questionable short cuts and of shifting purpose, invariably opposing me in argument.

I have given the village tea, which passed off in a cloud of glory composed of hot oysters, chicken salad, chocolate with whipped cream a-top, sandwiches, biscuit glacé, and pistache cake, instead of the usual local sop of salty ice-cream and adaman-tine chocolate cake.

That collation was an inspiration of Evan's. I said, having argued fore and aft about it with my Familiar for two months, —

"I must have this tea as a matter of course, for, you know, having no reception at the time of our wedding, and going away so soon, they scarcely realize us as a unit."

"Which you are quite determined that they shall do, having made up your mind to that effect, and notified me long ago," said Evan, laughing. "Do you know, Barbara, there *have* been times when I've been afraid that you were not quite feminine enough to be wholly comfortable in your surroundings, but I shall worry no longer!"



"What if I do wish to show you to all the people that have known me ever since I was a kitten, even if some of them are—well—original! Surely there is nothing strange in that."

Then I, too, was forced to laugh at the complete way in which I had committed myself.

"We will allow a double motive, then, if you wish, but doing so is a compliment to you, for which you must pay by telling me how to entertain them. Of course they will not come and go as people do in the city when bidden to tea at four, but arrive at the beginning and stay for two hours. Even your charms, great as they are, will hardly withstand such wear and tear. Shall we have some one to recite, a lecture on foreign missions illustrated by magic lantern slides of the India famine and pious Chinese, or will a palmist and some coon songs do?"

"Neither one nor the other," Evan answered emphatically. "Put all your strength into a substantial hot collation, order it from town, but do not mention the fact. Food bought ready made suggests hash or something warmed over, as well as a shirking of trouble to the simple rural minds of all countries. Having done this, give them plenty of time to talk, and your success is assured."

Perfectly true. On the appointed day Evan came home a little after four, donned his newest frock coat, his most deeply creased trousers, and an obstreperous tie, and pervaded the rooms smiling, and at intervals cheerfully partaking of cake which he never eats, and ice-cream, which always gives him a pain in his nose. Father wafted uneasily about, wearing his genial expression, but avoided emphatic expression of opinion upon any subject.

The good things disappeared rapidly, and at one time I feared a famine, but I had ordered in accordance with the number invited, and not on the two-thirds principle of the society which suffers from social surfeit.

The cream pistache cake was the belle of the ball. It was eyed dubiously at first, but every one took a second piece, and Mrs. Haddock from Centreville, dear soul, who had absolutely hired a livery team for the ten-mile drive, an unheard-of extravagance, took a third piece, which she dexterously concealed in her large squirrel muff, whispering to a neighbour:—

“That mustache cake beats me! It just creams in your mouth without chewin’, though the fillin’ does appear to be of green peanuts, and the icin’ beat up with spinach. I feel called to take a piece home to see what my son’s wife makes of it. And do you know,” subduing her voice still further, “I’d power-



ful like to ask what it's named for, but I can't quite fetch myself to. One thing's certain, that's a proper smart woman help of Evan's that they fetched over, if she is English. Lot, she never made such cake, let alone bein' so liberal with her victuals."

The fame of the pistache cake spread.

I was called upon to furnish the recipe, which was easily obtained, but called for so many ingredients and such skill in making that it impressed them as a species of culinary mathematics. It was decided by the Emporium that we were really well to do, and had not come to live at home because Evan was poor, that he had no intention of peddling vegetables, but owned a whole block of granite stores in the city, and merely went to town to collect his rents.

Upon such a trifle as the making and liberal distribution of cake does country reputation often hang, while in the city diamond stomachers, an opera box, a yacht, or an automobile would not reflect half so much glory.

After the tea was quite over, father and Evan disappeared together, and I found them sitting at the pantry table before a deliciously broiled porterhouse steak and dish of crisp potatoes, which Martha Corkle herself was serving. As I gave her a glance



in which question and approval blended, she said by way of explanation, born of the proper English regard of the man's rights in his home, in which, by the way, there was no tone of apology, rather of instruction, —

“The gentlemen needs something hearty, Mrs. Evan. Company food and sweets is most destroying to their habits. In the old days at such times I always served the master a steak in my sitting room with my own hands, I bein' housekeeper then, Mrs. Evan.”

Good woman! I think if the habits of our American men were not so frequently “destroyed” by haste and by company food, we should be better off. Thank you, Martha Corkle. I am not ashamed to learn of you.

I should be restless or at least tired and fidgety after these months of indoor life and repression, but I'm not. However, indoor life in the country is only a figure of speech to me at any season, save in the evening; and I've been so well that I've not even had the excuse of a snuffle cold to keep me in bed a single dark, sleepy morning. Now I feel, however, that the grip of civilization is loosening, and since morning I've been confronted and surrounded by a Terrible Temptation, one of the greatest that besets the commuter's wife on gardening bent. All day it

has been beside me. I have fought it bravely until various tasks were done; for when I once yield, I shall be absorbed and no longer mistress of myself. Now there is a comfortable hour before dinner; Delia, another log for the fire, the lamp with the pale yellow shade, the deepest chair! I abandon myself and draw the Terrible Temptation to me,—the seed catalogues that Evan has collected at the office and then sent in a bunch by the morning mail!

I sort them over, selecting four, of which all the others are but understudies, and straightway the hope of spring fills my heart and I am once more in the land of expectancy.

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*February 11* (evening). Like the prudent and methodical Plymouth Rock hens who may be seen going in procession to the seclusion of their house at a stated hour every evening, the time being regulated the year round by sunset, so twilight in winter invariably sees me at home, not dozing, but drawing my keenest mental stimulus from father and Evan; for as they spend their days in active contact with their fellow-men, their evening desire is of peace.

Many of the troubles of country living would dis-

appear if people would only cease dragging in city hours and conventionalities, or I might even say the hours and conventionalities of other climates and countries.

In England, city or country, it is the universal custom to wear low bodices to even informal dinners, but that does not make it a suitable habit to introduce amid New England rigours. It is sheer folly, as well as the custom of half-past seven or eight o'clock dinner in houses where the same maids, or often a single maid, must be ready to prepare and serve breakfast at seven or half-past the next morning. It is things like these that make the commuter's servants a floating population, and the employers themselves the butt of comic papers.

Hereabout a few of the summer people have tried to set an electric pace in everything, but long ago father and I agreed that we should keep to simple ways; when I dined from home or others came to us, I might wear the gayest, brightest gown I could concoct, but never bare my shoulders. For we out of town women of the upper middle class, commuters' wives especially, do not go often enough to such festivities to acclimate ourselves to changes from flannels to nothing, or to feel at home with topless garments, and they are therefore among us



an assumption,—a vulgarity. Oh, the flaunting of bare bones and leaf lard that father and I have seen in the past when entertained by some of his “summer resident” patients, whose culinary pretentions, by the way, were very slight. None of these, however, had the peculiar quality of flesh possessed by the “turtles,” a species of Englishwoman that Evan and I constantly met and so classified — age between fifty and seventy, never the mother of sons, but of daughters, only unmarried daughters, who evidently made their own clothes with the neck openings all of the same measure, irrespective of under or over development.

I’ve often wished when at some of the “professional necessity” dinner parties, that less meat on the hoof had been exhibited and more had been cooked and served at table, instead of the eight courses of spinklets that frequently separated the very tough and altogether-too-large-to-be-eaten-raw clams from the half cold, disintegrated coffee; but such are the risks of society, and so we learned to smile and say nothing; but when we came home, we always had a supper of honest roast beef sandwiches and — Bass’s ale. It does sound vulgar, but it’s so comforting, and ale is quite safe when one is rather tall, slender, and takes plenty of exercise.

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Alack! the divergences in my Garden Boke are many, but this one explains why I can now conscientiously give way to the Terrible Temptation; for to keep Evan and the maids in good condition, I have foresworn evening visiting for the cold months, and so this evening is quite my own.

*February 11.* Last night I attempted nothing in the way of list making; I simply explored my four catalogues.

One was a dainty leaflet from Vermont, chiefly exploiting hardy and native plants for the border, wild and bog garden. Bog Garden! I've an idea that the wet spot around the spring hole by the cow-path in the wood lot would make an enchanting boggery. The soil ranges from water covered through wet to merely damp, and could be easily shaped, and the tussock grass grubbed out. Besides, I see that this catalogue lists a great many plants of wet ground that used to grow wild here, and that we can dig up free of cost.

The next catalogue is from northern New York, of fruits, shade trees, shrubs, and roses. I will put this aside, with a sigh, however, for we have agreed not to buy any more shrubs and roses until fall, when we shall be quite sure where we wish to plant them.

The third is a substantial and conservative vol-

ume devoted to seeds and a few well-tested bulbs and roots. My grandfather bought his seeds from this firm, and from this I shall make my final list and send my order; and yet I turned almost feverishly to the fourth, the catalogue of adjectives and gay lithographs, upon whose cover is pictured a young and lovely lady (it would seem lacking in gentility to call her a woman). With her left hand she holds up her lace robe, showing high-heeled slippers, with the other she pushes an improved mowing machine, with which she has just completed cutting the grass on a two-acre lawn, though it is apparently early morning. In the far background is a bed of roses, each flower the size of the lady's head; and from the vegetable garden, which is in plain sight, the husband, clad in a dress coat and a four-in-hand tie, is taking in some strawberries of large size for breakfast, apparently twelve to the barrow in which he is wheeling them.

In spite of knowing that this is a Yellow Journal of Horticulture, I fold back the cover and continue the walk through a midsummer night's dream of improbabilities, — violets the size of a silver dollar, pansies as big as saucers frilled like a skirt dancer's robe, dwarf nasturtiums all flowers and no leaves, self-supporting sweet peas, and worse



yet, a well-known weed with a showy orange-red flower, hawkweed or devil's paintbrush, is recklessly praised. The same being a perfect curse to agriculture in the grass region is offered as a floral novelty, and so on until, passing from flower to vegetable garden, a tomato appears that requires a folded twelve-inch plate to picture it, "three-quarters life size"!

I still read on. The pictures are "all from life," taken at the seed-testing ground. Ah, yes, but please realize, Madam Commuter, that the seed-testing ground is not your garden, that the remarks do not apply to you, and that it is easy to enlarge photographs. Be thankful also that it is not your garden; for you would become blind with the glare of colour, and gardening would be such a mechanical certainty that there would be no pleasure in it.

I know all this by bitter experience in the days when plant money was tight. I have eaten the wild apple, and yet return to the bitter fruit. I have been burned, and yet poke the fire with my fingers. I know that the coloured flower packets at ten cents contain only as many seeds as the plain ones of the conservative old firm do at five cents, yet I reach for my pad and pencil, and find myself wondering if possibly the Perpetual Blooming Pekin Perfection Poppy offered, may not

bloom for five months instead of, as usual, shrivelling and disappearing after a fortnight's tropic glowing that necessitates sowing in succession.

No, the gambling spirit is strong in all agriculturalists, and especially so in the commuter's wife, when the vernal equinox approaches, and surely Wall Street itself is not possessed of more wiles than the Seed Catalogue. Even the offerings of the Plant Catalogue are a government bond by comparison. You buy your plant and at least it is tangible, but the seeds are promissory notes which nature upon occasion does not hesitate to repudiate. Still the fascination remains, a charm born of optimistic hope, of the same sort as is exercised by the patent medicine, flesh-reducing, wrinkle-destroying, and household washing-machine-without-work advertisements.

*February 15 (evening).* St. Valentine's Day. No birds mating as yet but English sparrows, which never seem to be otherwise. It was my painful duty to have three couples of them evicted from the martins' house this morning.

Evan has just brought me a box of roses and carnations from the city. The roses are all of the fragrant and lovable kind, and the carnations are great golden beauties with a rosy fringe. They made

a fine decoration for the dinner table, as my little wild fernery is fading, and I must refill it at last with some of my yellow tulips. I hope never to be too poor to have something flowery on the table; for eat as daintily as we may, it is a very physical employment, and flowers do much to divert our minds at least, from foodiness. Next to the dining table, the stand in the hall is my favourite place for a bouquet or a plant in bloom. Here every one can enjoy their beauty—the patients bound for father's office, to whom the visit should be made as cheerful as possible; and the maids about their work as well as we ourselves are cheered even though unconsciously.

Evan says when I am ready to make my bog garden, which if I follow his advice will not be this spring, I had better buy my plants instead of despoiling our own streams and ponds of them. Also that it will be quite as cheap if I credit the price of the necessary labour and wear and tear against them. As usual he is right, I think, for I remember several years ago I tried to dig some rose mallows by the river several miles away. I broke my trowel and ruined a pair of shoes, and the next day when Tim went for the mallows he brought the clump back in a fine block of peat; but unfortunately it held only the



stems, the roots being somewhere between here and China, so that it was a decided case of Plant Labour Lost!

It is always nice to have something ahead of one, so I'm putting the bog garden idea away in my desk, catalogue and all, together with that of the shrubs and roses. That is to say, I'm only ordering six crimson ramblers and fifty summer-blooming roses for the sun garden, such as *La France*, *Perle*, *Augusta Victoria*, *Malmaison*, *Coquette de Lyon*, *Duchess of Edinburgh*, *Souvenir d'un Ami*, *Sunset*, and *Bride*. These will give Evan a bud for his buttonhole after the June roses have gone and before the Margaret carnations grown from seed come in bloom.

I'm also ordering a dozen or so packets of seeds from the "Yellow Journal" catalogue, merely to settle my mind and prove that they are humbugs. I now have before me the catalogue of my ancestor's firm that has weathered time and sensation; so once again heredity comes to my aid.

This catalogue I have read and reread many times during the past five days, and I'm quite surprised to find, among the hundreds of species of flower seeds it offers, how comparatively few are needed for the making of my garden, or would be missed by any but

the specialist or dealer who wishes to make a numerous showing, if they should entirely disappear from the market. With the vegetables we discovered this years ago, and acquired great caution in trying new varieties. Evan also says that it is much the same with the plants, trees, and shrubs used in producing effects in everyday landscape architecture.

Of course all plants are suitable where they are native born, many are adaptable to new conditions, and many others are lovely, but of such a fleeting quality of bloom that they are quite out of place in a garden where space is in any way limited, so that in spite of the trivial cost of the seed, they are an extravagance because of the small yield of satisfaction in proportion to the soil they cover.

Most of these evanescent flowers flock under the title of annuals; and though many may yield masses of gorgeous colour in July and August, they have little or no part in the bloom of the earlier and later season.

Last night, after I had revised my list for the third time,—the first lists would have stocked a warehouse,—and recopied it, I showed it to Evan.

He looked rather cynical, made a rapid calculation in which the quantities I had ordered and the square feet seemed inextricably mixed, and then said,—



"Far be it from me to limit you, but at a moderate estimate, allowing for the usual failures to sprout, you are ordering enough seeds to sow two acres. Where do you mean to plant them?"

"Why, in the sun garden, of course," I stammered, beginning to realize that the gardening possession is like intoxication, for when under its influence you see double, and not only do your flower beds increase in number, but in size also. "You know we planned to keep all the perishable summer flowers together there; that is, except the nasturtiums and sweet peas, which of course must go either side of the long walk."

"With the quantities limited, the list is fairly conservative," he continued, "but I see a dozen annuals there that we surely have no room to waste upon, and they will leave a bare spot early in September, if not sooner. I do not expect that you will give them up without a trial, — nothing less will convince you, — but I'll lay you a wager of a new rose-arbour to nothing, that their names will not be on your list next year," and as he spoke, he checked off a name here and there, adding a remark as if dismissing the plant for good: —

"Sweet alyssum: Only good for formal edgings."

"Amaranthus in mass: All too big and weedy for a small garden."





THE GOLDEN GLOW OF HARDY COREOPSIS

THE GOLDEN GLOW OF HARDY COREOPSIS







"Castor beans: Too pretentious for your garden, and not in character."

"Tassel flower (*cacalia*): Feebly inefficient. Belongs to the days of little choice."

"Annual chrysanthemums: Turn to mush in a rainy season and require as much care as bedding plants."

"Gourds: Grotesque. Only fit for a child's garden, and they harbour squash bugs."

"Everlastings in variety: Belong to the days of dried apples and herb tea. Not needed by those who can buy fresh flowers in winter."

"Love in a mist: Trivial."

"Annual poppies: Either dry up or decay. Climate too uncertain for the annual varieties, excepting fall-sown Shirleys."

Until finally my list, chastened and much reduced, is copied for the last time. Of annuals it has asters in separate colours, Truffants, Victoria and pompon; calendulas, coreopsis, centaurea or bluets, cosmos, lobelia errecta, mignonette, climbing nasturtiums, Japan pinks, portulacca, salvia splendens, white "cut-and-come-again" stocks, sunflowers in variety, sweet peas, wall flowers of the annual dwarf kind, verbenas of the mammoth tribe, evening primrose, nicotiana affinis, — the white night-blooming

tobacco, — cheerful balsams, and zinnias in many shades.

The perennial and biennial plants and bulbs of the hardy borders we shall renew by seed or root division, but the list of what were here already, or were set out in November, is a brave one : peonies (colours unknown), phlox, columbines, Canterbury bells, foxgloves, bleeding heart, white, yellow, and red day lilies, Spanish, German, and Japan iris, honesty (lunaria), golden glow rudbeckia, pyrethrum, oriental poppies, hollyhocks, monkshood, anemone-Japonica, larkspurs of all shades from white to deep metallic blue, hardy white, pink, and red fringed pinks, lupins, evening primroses, bee balm, and hardy pompon chrysanthemums.

I have also here a list of roots and bedding plants to stock the garden with, that I hope to keep from year to year in a flower pit with a stove in it that I have in mind if godmother's fifty pounds hold out; and I think they will, because Evan has been so good and forgiven me a small sheaf of bills that I expected to pay from it, so that it's only been sampled as yet. These plants are heliotrope, scarlet and fragrant geraniums, lemon verbenas, tender roses, chrysanthemums, both Japanese and Chinese; Dahlias double, single, and cactus, and gladioli in plenty.

How long it will seem from the time my seed list



goes until the hotbed is ready for the planting! Middle March is quite early enough, because if you begin sooner, unless you pot off the plants, they grow too big, and are mashed when the sashes are opened and closed.

I haven't shown Evan the list of things that I ordered from the "Yellow Journal" catalogue, and now he is over in father's study, where he has politely gone to take a hand at whist, so I will not disturb him.

Father wishes to interest the local clergy in the hospital and have them all on the board, so that the institution shall be unsectarian, but not irreligious, which is what that poor word often seems interpreted to mean. I wonder how it will work!

If sects could exist without bigotry, I think it would be so much better than trying to abolish them. As this is a material and not a spiritual world, a certain amount of competition seems necessary to keep things going, so religion has got to have a physical body and sex, so to speak, just the same as people. Only cherubim and seraphim can afford to do without either.

Three of the clergy dined here to-night,—the Roman Catholic, the Anglican Catholic (ours), and the Severely Protestant.

We had a very good dinner, — that is always a safe thing; but if the Board meetings are to be like the conversation, I'm afraid they won't do, for there will be no food as a bond of sympathy.

The S. P. bubbled over with good fellowship of the "dear sister in the faith" order, only he took it that everybody else was of his opinion, and didn't wait to see. He is a peculiar man and religiously inconsistent, constantly doomed to deplore his own actions. He has, like John Rogers, nine children, which he uses alternately as flags of triumph and alms basins. As it is spring, he waved them vigorously at the R. C.: autumn, the time of new shoes and flannels, is the alms-basin season. The R. C. ate in comparative silence, watched, fed the dogs quietly, and — smiled. The A. C., really a charming and cultivated man, felt himself between two fires, and was so aggressively uncomfortable that I did not know him.

One thing I feel, that if the R. C. goes on the hospital board *with* that smile and his power of holding his tongue — well, it's not my affair, but I shall advise father not to ask him.

The reason that Evan is over there playing whist is because the S. P. doesn't believe in cards, or at least says politely that he "can't

play." Blessed "can't." Neither can I. The card cell was left out of my brain, or perhaps was early absorbed by the gardening cell, which should lie next door to it, both being games of chance.

My defect, however, has kept us from joining the Hillside Social Whist Club, without giving offence, because of course Evan isn't expected to go without me, and for a person who can't play to join a whist club of seasoned matrons and patrons would be worse than for a blind man to go to a pantomime.

Then permanent clubs that go on winter after winter (I think Aunt Lot joined this one when I was sixteen) are so — well, so stupefying, to say the least; and the supper is likely to be of what Evan calls the surprise order, because you are surprised if you get any, and I'm so hungry if I sit up after ten o'clock in winter. Then imagine voluntarily leaving a tête-à-tête with Evan in a garden full of books all in full bloom, not to mention seed catalogues, for a whist party, even if you could play.

What do I hear? The jingle of glasses, and father's room is full of smoke, too. Evan is actually offering the S. P. hot Scotch! The wretch! Has he no tact?

Ah, the S. P. is taking it!



Yes, of course, "a little for the stomach's sake," etc.; he has a cold, and father is prescribing it professionally. Wicked father! All three have colds!

The R. C. smiles and makes no apologies. He seems a companionable sort of fellow, after all.

## XII

### PLANTING

*March 10.* The snow is falling softly and steadily, as it did on that Saturday in December when winter and the great storm came together. Earth for the most part has been snugly blanketed ever since, but during the last two weeks she has seemed restless and thrown aside the covering, showing her brown body here and there; but as yet it is pulseless and irresponsible. For even as human vitality is at its lowest ebb in the early morning, so it is with plant life in the early spring.

From the sense of sight alone it might still be a midwinter afternoon, but the ear catches the spring keynote. True, the winter birds, pine finch, cross-bills, and chickadees, are calling in the spruces, but an occasional song mingles with their greetings, the exquisite carol of the fox-sparrows beginning jubilantly and dropping to a swift close, and I know that these are the first migrants feeding below in the field where the wind has laid bare the seeded grasses.

Wonderful gift of the senses divided as well as united for our use! To the eye it is winter, to the ear and the heart it is spring.

I have not written in my Garden Boke for a fortnight, — not since the night I completed my lists of seeds. I have been away, away in my commuter's city.

I did not care to go, and my Familiar Spirit and I held heated arguments over the visit. Yet I went.

I said, "Why should I go?"

The Familiar replied, "Because you wish to."

"But I do *not*. I dislike the very idea."

"Then why consider it?"

"Because I think it will do Evan good to have a vacation from travel, and because I think that I ought to go. He also thinks it will be good for me. Because some dear old friends have invited us. Because the time between seed buying and seed planting is so long that I'm out of patience and in danger of wearing holes in the seed packets by fingering them."

"All good reasons, but the main one is that you wish to go."

"I tell you that I dislike the city intensely."

"That may be, and yet you can like some of the



things it has to offer. It is not well to decry the source of supply. The money to support commuters' wives is largely made in the city."

My Familiar Spirit can be exceedingly material and disagreeable at times, so I pretended not to hear, but continued, —

"Of course there is music to be heard there just now, and some paintings I wish to see, and if one does not go to the city once in a time to really visit, not to be a hotel mongrel, one is not able to eat or shake hands in an up-to-date way with the summer people on the bluff, or know what the queer new table utensils are for. Though one doesn't care, at the same time one likes to know."

"As I said, *you wish to go*," emphasized the Familiar Spirit in an exasperating way, retiring from the dialogue as if the final word had been spoken. I should have explained, if my Familiar Spirit had given me time, that the only real objection I have to the city is born of the impossibility of living there. As a great fair-ground, a place to visit, it is satisfactory and seldom monotonous, for you are quite sure never twice to find your friends living in the same house or following the same fads. You may be amused, then bored, then have your wits sharpened or your nerves racked;

meet friends gathered from the four corners of the earth, or find the place as desolate as Siberia. You may laugh and you may also cry. Yes, that is one of the reasons why I could not stay in a city. There is so much misery one must see and cannot help, that it makes one feel small and shrivelled, while hereabout there is no one so wretched but what it is possible to aid him. You may, in short, do everything in the city but live. I mean live your own life, and not that of some particular clique, the society of which, if you ignore, your loneliness will be such that not the remotest dweller on the mountain side could compass or imagine it—the desolation of a crowd!

Then to be ill in the city! I was ill, very ill there, the winter that I was eighteen. It was in a good house, and the people were kind. I lay there day after day, and all that I could see of the sky was a little ragged scrap between the tall house-tops. The sun never crossed this gap, but sometimes at night I saw the dogstar, and from the diffused light I knew that the moon was up. I lay watching and pining more and more until one night, when the moon at last crossed my vista, it was a strange thing rent and divided by overhanging wires, and Sirius himself seemed only a lamp in the tallest building. As I looked, life

seemed to steal away from me, not leaving wholly but keeping beyond my grasp, as it does when the body lies long unconscious before death.

Then father, wholly comprehending, in spite of risk carried me home, I never knew how, and when I next looked out I saw the gray-limbed maples framing sunset, and in that glow my life came back to me. Now it occurs to me that father's study of two imaginative, high-strung women at close range has given him his wondrous insight into the sex temperament, a knowledge that the mere technically perfect scientist fails to compass.

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I have been to the city, and the return fills me with ecstasy. Here are some delights that the savage misses from sheer lack of contrast, some phases of civilization that are worth bearing temporarily for the pleasure of the reaction. If one never went to the city, one might not so keenly realize the country's potency, just as it is well worth the trouble of wearing best clothes occasionally, if merely for the pleasure of taking them off.

I should have stored away the details of this visit with the "general results" of the year, for after all it was fairly comfortable as visits go, but the Fa-



miliar Spirit would ask somewhat impertinent questions.

"Was Evan rested by the vacation?" for like all familiar things it calls us by our first names.

"He was amused and had an entire change of scene, which is said to be the same thing," I answered laughingly.

"And you? How about the handshake? And did you conquer the rotation of forks? How are they wearing soup plates, flat or deep?"

"As there are two social schools, the old and the new, I must confess to you, Familiar Spirit, the handshake is in a chaotic condition and the soup plates also. In two cases, however, what I took for bonbon scoops proved to be soup spoons, dreadful utensils for high-chested dowagers inclined to slobber, as well as for mustached men. But then, mustached men are under ban, and these scoops were doubtless invented to complete their extermination. However, I predict gold straws for soup sucking in the near future, and Saxon beards should be due next winter. Listen, Familiar Spirit, but do not repeat! In spite of all my watchfulness, at the most formal dinner of my stay I lost count of weapons, and when at the finish I had exhausted all but one, I faced the problem of lifting rather soft ice-cream and

hot chocolate sauce with what to my benighted vision seemed to be a silver toothpick! A sub-butler finally brought me an ice-cream fork, warm from the dish water, greatly in contrast to his chilly glance.

"When I retrospected later, I discovered the spiked tool was meant to unscale the artichokes, and 'twas there I dropped the stitch. But tell it not, Familiar Spirit, until you hear my excuse. My dinner partner was the last of six who in two weeks' time had said, 'Don't you get jolly bored living in the country?' as if they had rehearsed the words and tone in chorus."

I never before formulated how crude and narrowly cockneyfied the town life is here in the United States until I went away. What English gentleman would ask a country-living woman if her life bored her?

Two weeks of this instead of the home-table talk, and a weird entrée constantly at your elbow in lieu of a dog's soft nose! And the after talk about who won at "bridge" that afternoon, or whether it should be Lakewood for the week-end, or if the husbands could be coaxed as far as Aitkin. Think of it, — instead of listening to father and Evan's book arguments, comfortably curled up in the ingle nook. Or if they were silently busy, strolling about old London with

Leigh Hunt, spending an hour of mystery in the Tower with Ainsworth, or, being in a frivolous mood, donning a moral mask, the more discreetly to follow Houssaye, a gentleman of Evan's introduction, into the company of the Duke of Buckingham and Madame Popelinière.

Shakespeare was a sage for any and every day, and our merry-making paper *Puck* chose a headline that no one will dispute: "What fools these mortals be!"

It is narrow for me to criticise the ways of these women. They could not have my father for theirs or be married to Evan, so what can be expected of them? It's a combination of sheer good luck and stupidity that my sporting interests have gone to horses, dogs, and garden, instead of to "bridge."

But worst of all to my country-bred body was the two weeks of going late to bed wide awake and vibrating, and of waking up dull and exhausted.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ah! the snow clouds have parted before the last sunbeams, proving it March and not December. One more walk amid the snow draperies that have cheered the winter, and lingering here kept away the only combination which the country dweller need



dread,—a black March where frost and thaw wrestle, and the result is — misery and mud.

*March 15.* The Ides of March, of tragic memory, have brought me snowdrops, — which are the first waking thought of the Garden of Dreams. I did not expect them so soon. I was not searching for them; I was standing in the sunshine by the Mother Tree, looking at the wound made by the cutting of a branch that the great storm had broken, when I spied the snowdrops peeping from under the shelter of the circular seat where Evan had planted them.

I could not bring myself to pick these, for they seemed to belong to mother, but there were more beside the path and nestled against the grass-bank by the rose arbour, so I gathered some of them and massed them with green moss in a frosted jar, — a spring greeting to the dinner table. Father has always held that everything best and brightest of word or thought or face ought to be gathered round this board, considering it a sacred place from which all hurry and trouble and dissension should be banished.

This afternoon I planted the flower seeds in the hotbed, and the touch of the moist warm earth was like a caress. It seems a very simple thing to do, this planting, but it is not, for the adjustment of depth and pressure to the size of seed requires in-

telligent handling. If too deeply covered, they will mould; if too lightly, they will be washed out by the slightest lack of judgment in sprinkling, and the cry of the discouraged, "My seeds did not come up," is the result.

The "general useful" may be exemplary, and in all other respects "know a hawk from a handsaw," but he cannot tend seeds in a hotbed. In his anxiety lest they be thirsty or chilled, he waters too much and hesitates to ventilate properly on pleasant days. The result is that the seedlings either spindle or suddenly disappear altogether, through the ravages of mould. In short, hotbed responsibility is not to be transferred.

I must wear gloves in my gardening work, else I may have knobs on my joints at forty. I allowed myself the luxury of touching the soil to-day, for my fingers are like the antennæ of an insect, and receive many a thrill of pleasure that would be insulated by gloves. Then, too, I seem to breathe partly through my finger-tips.

I think it better to start all flower seeds in the hotbed except half a dozen kinds that are grown *en masse*, like sweet peas, nasturtiums, mignonette, nicotiana, bluets, convolvulus, or the untransplantable sweet sultans and annual poppies. It is so much

easier to keep track of your colours and adjust the plants themselves in the beds than to thin out seedlings. Then, too, with our climate of droughts and cloud-bursts, the growth of the more delicate seeds is precarious. If one lacks a hotbed altogether, much can be done in terra-cotta trays on the window ledge. In fact, I've sown my Margaret carnation seeds in this way, for the hotbed does not give them the cool air they need, and they are already up and thrifty.

Under my eye Bertle has also sown some tender vegetable seeds this afternoon,—egg-plants, tomatoes, peppers, cauliflower, — besides devoting a frame each to early lettuce, radishes, and cucumbers. He has a straight eye and a sense of proportion that promise well for the neatness of the vegetable garden.

*March 20.* The snow has retreated from the open places, but still whitens the north side of fences and shady places in the wild garden. The Christmas ferns, polypody, and mosses, missing the frosty moisture, are looking quite shabby. The cheerful phœbe bird is here, and the redwing; and the crocuses that I planted in October are unfolding, the golden yellow taking the lead. Early this morning a prelude of the spring chorus floated up from the ever-



greens, drawing me to the new window-seat. I know that morning and evening will often find me there in comfortable disarray, listening and gazing through the vista of the trees.

The violets in the frame have done bravely all winter, but now their stems are growing short and the deep purple colour is paling. To-day Evan had his first outdoor buttonhole flower, for snowdrops are too frail for wearing. It was a tiny cluster of *Daphne mezereum*, nestling in its ever-green leaves,—the earliest shrub to blossom, holding the same place in the garden that the trailing *arbutus* does among woodland flowers.

*March 25.* We have a new dog—number six. We did not buy him, but were made his guardians in a way impossible to refuse. He is a most unique animal, a real old dog Tray in looks, not years. His name is The Orphan, and he looks it. His coming was in this wise:—

A few days ago a flagman on the branch railway that runs northwest from town was hurt to death by the derailing of a train. Father saw at once that he could live but a few hours, and that freedom from pain was all that he could give him. He asked the man if there was any one he wished to see, any little matter that he would like adjusted.

At first the man seemed stunned, and did not answer. Then he said:—

“I'd like to see The Orphan, sir. There's nobody else that'll care. He's my dog. I guess you'll find him in my flag-house behind the coal box. That's where he lies of nights, if you care to bother. I don't suppose you will, though,” this with a wistful glance, while a big tear rolled down his cheek.

In half an hour or so the dog was brought, a sombre creature, big and woolly, looking like a huge Skye terrier. He gave a little whine of joy, licked the poor man's hand, and crouched close to him.

“He's almost four years old. He was a freight car 'left over' when I got him as a pup. He'd be good company to you if you happen to need a dog, and he don't eat much. Else perhaps you'd give him something—a drug, you know. He's too retiring to make out foragin' for himself, and he ain't got any friends but me. His looks was always up against him.”

“I have five dogs already,” said father, “but I will take him. No faithful dog is ill-looking to me.”

So he arrived, sitting solemnly by father in the gig, and Evan pronounced him an old-time English sheep-dog, and well bred.

Strange to say, he has attached himself to Tim, after fretting for a time and seeming ill at ease with so much space to walk about in, and a whole horse stall for a bed. And Tim, who only tolerates dogs in a grudging sort of way, evidently returns the feeling. To-day, hearing conversation in the stable, I thought Bertle was there with Tim, but found only The Orphan leaning against Tim's knees and licking his fingers that were feeding him scraps of meat, while Tim looked positively pleasant.

It doesn't so much matter what one loves. To love is the transfiguring thing.

*March 26.* To-day I found hepaticas on the wood edge, and the tiny white violets that bloom almost before the leaves uncurl are perfuming a dozen sun spots in the garden. It is not often that wild and garden flowers may be combined and keep their attributes, but these two harmonize perfectly, and carry indoors the elusive spirit of early spring.

*April 1.* All Fools' Day. I have planted my sweet peas, a pound's weight, in a long double row in the new ground beyond the sun garden. The tall nasturtiums will match them on the other side, making a narrow alley of the walk where it meets the cow-path to the wood lot.

The garden will have a trick played on its trustful-



ness, I fear. A sharp, cold wind already rebuffs the violets and makes me tremble lest we have laid bare the hardy beds and uncapped the rose bushes too soon.

In the hardy garden the Scylla and Charybdis of springs lies between the keeping of things too warm and uncovering prematurely.

*April 10.* A sullen week of hope deferred. Evan has been on a little journey. How changed the house is when the personality that pervades its every corner is withdrawn! Each one feels it, the maids and dogs alike. Father even is restless, having come from years of lacking it to lean on male companionship; and I — I fully understand why in old times, when the knight went forth, his lady, feeling too cross for general society, betook herself to a tower. There she alternately gazed at and polished his second best shield until trumpets sounding and the drawbridge falling announced his return, when, rushing down, she fell into his embrace, unclasped his armour, and kneeling, relieved him of his sword.

Of course now there is no drawbridge, the door opens easily, the dogs replace the trumpets, and very well do Bugle and Tally-ho imitate them. Evan sets down his suit case unassisted, but the embrace remains and all the gladness.

*April 15.* The first hyacinths, daffodils at their height, and the Russian violets by the Mother Tree a bed of glorious velvet bloom.

To-day we filled an alcove between two snowball bushes in the bed of the long walk, thick with bud-ded pansy plants and tufts of English daisies. What a delicate birch odour the pansies have!

*April 18.* Early tulips ablaze. All the narcissi out except the polyanthus with its clustered blossoms, and the poets, with the lovely pheasant's eye. The hardy plants are now tufting the long beds with many shades of green. Forsythia is in golden glory. The scarlet quince at full, and the countryside white and pink with peach and cherry blossoms.

*May 1.* At last the Garden of Dreams has awaked. It is! After the healthful winter of snow the whole land is a-bloom. All the bulbs are out except the parrot tulips. Down by the spring hole in the wild garden the marsh cowslips are heavy with gold, and the same colour is swept across the pastures by the dandelions. Is it not all my garden? All the cultivated and the wild, every flower and fern in the wood and open as well, for not only what I plant is mine, but also everything that I enjoy. And the birds, too, do they not belong to me through the loving of them? Though they must not know it;

even the thought of being possessed might mar their liberty.

Evan found his primroses yesterday morning, one tuft showing half a dozen blossoms. When I saw his face as he called me to him, holding them in his hand, I realized that after all it is the little things of life that count, for the primrose was not only precious in itself, but for all it stood for.

I was thinking this morning as I watched the bluebirds flitting about their knot-hole in the apple tree, heard the meadow-larks down in the pasture, the flicker laughing in the wood lot, the robins in the spruces, and the jolly song-sparrow almost by my elbow, that the important garden birds are like the flowers in number. How few comparatively of the hundreds listed in the ornithologies we can know well enough to call garden companions, even if the residents of the wood lot and home woods be counted in.

Many come and go, travelling beyond us. We hear a strange note and see a flutter of unusual feathers. We may call them by name; but like the flowers unsuited to the garden, they are not of our world. A list of twenty-five would cover the confidentially intimate, of fifty the really tangible.

Martha Corkle came to tell me mysteriously that



Tim has a cold, she is quite sure, because he has taken off his flannels too soon, "which, Mrs. Evan, is risky for a man of his years" (Tim must be upward of fifty), "and would you not kindly ask the doctor that he cautions him?"

I asked her why she does not speak to Tim herself, as she has observed the cold and I have not, and as a middle-aged widow she could certainly mention flannels.

"Indeed, Mrs. Evan, I thought it more proper-like to come from a married woman that is recent, so to say, me being so long widowed is the same as not being; and as for age, there's others older, ma'am. The shape of those common bought flannels not fittin' his leanin' figure might be at the bottom of it. I bein' willin' to make up some more suitable from always making Corkle's, if you'd but give me the order so to do, Mrs. Evan."

After a moment the complicated sentences straightened themselves to my understanding, and I solemnly said:—

"Martha, could you oblige me by making some spring flannels for Timothy Saunders if the doctor prescribes them for him?" Whereat the nearest approach to a smile I had ever seen there crossed her features, and she actually dropped an old-world

curtsy, saying, "I will, and thank you kindly," becoming for the moment the comfortable English countrywoman, instead of the hereditary servant out of her class. Really there are human possibilities in Martha.

*May 11.* I think there is a four-handed romance brewing in the kitchen sitting room, the quartette being Bertle and Delia, sober-minded Eliza and Tim, who is perfectly unconscious that he is an admired party. In the evening I hear laughter and know that "hearts" and "forty-five" are being played. I also know that Martha Corkle does not approve, for I see her rigid shadow sitting apart, taking no share, but bound to play the matron.

*May 15.* Colour is swathing the land again, — lavish colour, the delicate whites, flesh, and pink of apple blossoms, fleecy clouds of lilacs drifting from the bank-wall before the house to the roadway, pinxter flower on the hillside, along the wood road blending with the white dogwood, and in the garden lilies-of-the-valley. Truly does the flower language translate their meaning as "Return of Happiness."

*May 17.* For two days we have picked and picked the lilies, and yet there is no end. They will last the month out if there is no heavy rain to make them yellow. Evan has gone to town each day laden like

a Maypole, the neighbours have had their share and to-morrow I take a clothes-basket of little bouquets to the hospital.

I think if we were to fall asleep for ten years, the whole place would be overgrown with these lovely flowers, the soil suits them so perfectly.

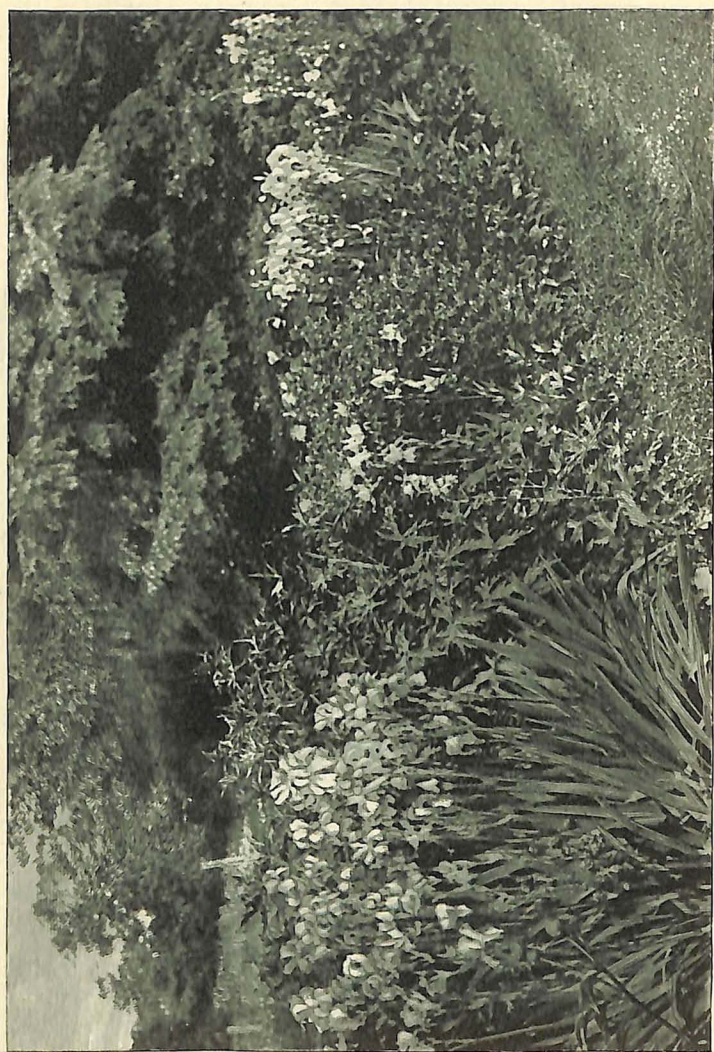
The resting time is over for garden and gardener. All is push, excitement, and hurry, the relentless hurry of growth. Every day something is planted, some long-watched bud unfolded. After the twentieth it will be safe to move the seedlings from the hotbeds and set out the bedding plants, geraniums, heliotrope, and such-like that this year I've ordered from a wholesale florist in town.

One and all we rush outdoors twenty times a day, the dogs rebelling at the curbing of their liberty, "Down! charge!" being the order of the season. Bluff alone is discreet enough to be allowed within garden bounds at planting time, and he has learned to tread gently; often he is meekly apologetic for even overstepping on the grass border beside the path.

The breakfast table is drawn into the bay window looking toward the garden, and on balmy evenings we take our after-dinner coffee under the Mother Tree. Gardeners may not sit idly on the front







THE LONG STRIP IS A PERFECT RAINBOW OF IRIS





THE LONG STRIP IS A PERFECT RAINBOW OF IRIS

porch at evening daintily apparelled. This is the best time for labour, the time to disappear from view and, collarless and wrapped in a russet apron, delve and grovel until dusk conceals one altogether.

For a woman, early morning is the time to gather flowers, not to cultivate them. The gathering and arranging brings their fragrance into one's life, but weeding or kneeling among dewy plants, stooping and moiling while the sun each moment blazes more fiercely, is for the workman only. To the woman it means fatigue before noon, and that sunken feeling in the chest that whispers of indigestion or desire for sodden sleep directly after luncheon. I have done it and I know.

*May 30.* Decoration Day. Evan at home. The garden is time-true, and yields deep crimson peonies, white iris, and blue lupins to be blended together for the soldiers' graves, as it did of old. The peonies, to be sure, are not true red, but they at least complete the symbol.

The hardy oriental poppies, scarlet with the black eye, are fast unfurling from their green coverings, and the long bed that we left all of a jumble is bright with iris of many hues — white, violet, purple, wine-red, yellow, and variegated; in fact, the long strip is a perfect iris rainbow.

This morning we planted the seven raying beds around the sundial. Evan conceived the idea of matching them as nearly as possible with the colours of the solar spectrum. These are red, yellow, green, blue, and purple, with the intermediate shades. The difficulty is to get the various colours in flowers of even growth. We found all of the shades but blue among the double zinnias, a family of sturdy growth and willing bloom, — crimson, scarlet, yellow, orange, lilac, and purple. For the blue we chose the rich metallic cornflower (or centaurea), Emperor William, the grass between the rays giving abundance of green. Of course this combination is a lottery. The wheel may be either gorgeous or hideous, for there is but a step between. It is such experiments as this, however, that keep the gardener alert. Yet there are people who are surprised if one is not bored by living in the country!

*May 31.* The first garden tragedy. Alas, that Evan should be the victim! This morning when he was picking a few last sprays of lily-of-the-valley, his commutation ticket slid from his vest pocket unobserved and lodged among the leaves, where it hid until I discovered it in the afternoon. Not only did he have to pay his fare to town and back again at night, but he had no ticket to exchange for the



next month's issue. The pathos of this tragedy cannot be writ in words. Its inwardness is ethical and not financial, and to be appreciated only by the commuter and — his wife!

## XIII

### JUNE

#### OLD ROSES WORTH GROWING

*June 8.* The first rose,—only the frail, briery, Harrison's yellow that came overseas in 1830 and still lingers in old gardens, but a June rose nevertheless.

The garden of the long walk is all aflame with the oriental poppies, and the fall planted Shirleys, as if kindled by them, are carrying the fire line quite down to the sun garden, the deep red colour paling through all shades of scarlet, rose, and pink to blush-edged white. The poppy though brief of days is the garden hypnotist. Look steadily at a mass of these glowing flowers blending their multicolours in the full sunlight. At first their brilliancy is blinding; then as the petals undulate on the slender stems, your attention is riveted as if a hundred eyes returned your gaze, and drowsiness steals over you, for each flower bears the spell of the hypnotic pod, whose seeds bring sleep.

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"Why does the pine tree moan?" asked the poppy.

"It does not," answered the grass that crept about the pine's roots. "That is its way of breathing."

"I make oblivion," said the poppy.

"And I, love," said the rose.

"Are they not both the same?" asked the tall white pine, stooping to shake the dew from its slender fingers.

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In these days the morning scent lies heavy, and even the grass yields it. The mixed grasses of the early meadows are more fragrant than the later. The perfume of the vanilla grass is ravishing, while the stiff, stark timothy seems more like straw. Now among the outdoor sounds, bird music at its height and the babbling notes of the early nestlings, comes a new tone, the voice of the lawn mower. If you listen to it sympathetically, you will find it has a various vocabulary and that its moods may be easily interpreted by the human ear.

If the grass is of the right height and condition for the cutting, then is the machine happy, cheerfully talkative, easily garrulous. If, however, the turf is



overlong and wet, the accents are thick and choked as if its throat needed clearing. If one wheel is on the narrow border and the other on the walk, there is a rasp of protest and a complaining tone denoting a limping gait; while if the machine is banged heedlessly against tree trunk or porch steps, recoil both mental and physical is suggested by the angry growl and whirr.

All garden tools have speech if the ear is keyed to hear it. The shove-hoe working on the gravel path can voice whether it is seriously searching out weeds or merely shuffling irresponsibly about. And the same tale is told by the common hoe in the corn-fields.

The garden history of June would still be in many volumes if there were no roses, but as it is, all else must give place to the head of a family that also yields us strawberry, peach, pear, plum, apple, and many of the most useful shrubs.

The scarlet poppies of early June introduce a colour that seems to belong with the flowers of mid-summer and appears out of place among the more delicate hues of the early garden even as the scarlet tulip looks gaudy in contrast with the narcissi and iris, though perhaps for well blended richness the hardy flowers of June will match those of any season.







A TANGLE OF POPPIES, SWEET WILLIAM, AND FOXGLOVES



A TANGLE OF POPPIES, SWEET WILLIAM, AND FOXGLOVES.

The larkspurs ranging from white through sky and mazarine blue to a metallic purple; Canterbury bells of a fine porcelain opaqueness, white, lilac, rose, and purple; columbines of every solid colour and the white-lined varieties, too, that suggest the fairylike blossoms wrought by skilful glass blowers; lemon-yellow day lilies that make a brave showing against a background of copper beech branches; peonies like great roses, beginning in May with the crimson Jacqueminot colour; spires of old-world foxglove, four feet tall, swaying above the golden glow of hardy coreopsis; and mats of sweet William, white, pink, crimson, pheasant's eye, and harlequin, that crowd the fringed clove pinks almost out of the border. Then, too, there is a day edition of the yellow evening primrose, and honesty (*lunaria*), the herb of magic, in three tints, — white, lavender, and purple.

All these flowers are of course improved by frequent resowing and resetting, and by having ample elbow room, and yet nowhere do they seem so typical, so gracefully lovable, and so wholly what hardy folk should be, as in the bit of the old border that we have not yet disciplined, where the soil is completely hidden by a tangle of poppies, sweet William, and foxgloves.

A book of praise might be written to hardy



shrubs. June may claim many that in late seasons overflow from May, — the newer lilacs (though they are never so satisfactory as the old, that, straggling into the hedges may be gathered by the armful), spireas, snowballs, Carolina alspice and syringas, while Deutzia, hydrangea, and althea carry the shrub flowers well on toward autumn.

Few things are so permanently satisfactory about the home acres as shrubs; and the commuter's wife may find refuge, likewise her table decorations, in them when mischance overtakes more delicate flowers.

"Shrubs are an awful bother to trim, aren't they?" said the Lady of the Italian Garden yesterday, on making the first call after her summer entry at The Bluffs, and professing astonishment at the number of our pickable flowers.

"We set out a lot two years ago," she continued, "and certainly should have flowers this spring, but you see the fault all lies in the trimming. The landscapist that started us off said of course the gardener would know which ones had to be trimmed in the spring and which at midsummer. But it seems he got mixed, and balled the thing up, so the first year there was not so much as a sprig of bloom, and hardly a leaf.

"Last fall, when we hired your Chris as second gardener for the outdoor things, I particularly charged him to find out which was which, and remember it. Instead, to make things sure, he has shaved 'em off all alike, round as cheeses and the twigs as short as my French poodle's hair when he's clipped for summer. Yes, my dear, not a bud left on the rhododendrons, two hundred bushes of them arranged with rocks behind to make a ravine effect on the left side of our lawn by the grand drive. All connected, too, for lighting 'em with electrics. It is simply maddening. Jenks-Smith has just bounced him, and we've got to fill in the ravine with cannas and coleus. The landscapist was up yesterday, fifty dollars every time he comes, and he was shocked, and says the scheme is wholly inconsistent. But what can we do?

"Perhaps your husband would come over some evening and suggest something, not in the way of business, — just an informal call, you know, — for those poor clipped things look like left-over Christmas greens. How do you manage your pruning now?"

I smiled internally as I thought of Chris, and told her that the old shrubs had largely taken care of themselves, except for a little shortening of strag-

gling branches and cutting out of the old wood as fresh growth replaced it, and we expected that the new shrubs would do likewise.

Then, too, I said that we do like father's old woman patient over on the charcoal hill. She had only six shrubs, and yet her little dooryard seemed overflowing with bloom. When people stopped to ask how she pruned to get so many blossoms, she answered, "Prune? Pickin' constant and givin' away, is the naturalest sort o' prunin', I reckon."

Of course Mrs. Jenks-Smith did not believe me, however.

"I know very well that you've got some secret about gardening that you won't tell."

"You are partly right," I assented wearily. "Yes, there is a secret, but I'll tell it to you willingly, and in it also lies the reason why we let Chris go. 'First, be sure what you want, and then do it yourself, or at least see it done.'"

"Is that a rebus?" queried Mrs. Jenks-Smith, wrinkling her brows. "Ah, yes, I understand. But, my dear woman, it's impossible! Me stand out in the sun! Me cut flowers to give away! It would ruin my social position. Then the manicure says that arranging flowers is so bad for the fingers and greens the nails, and that I shouldn't



even do that, for I *must* have good hands; I've got so many new rings, you know. Jenks-Smith gives me one every time he makes a coup."

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*June 10.* The Fuchsias that I planted two weeks ago in the shady corner between the end of the rose arbour and the bank are doing finely. I wonder why this flower is so neglected. True, the country women often cherish a plant or two on the porch in company with the oleander, night-blooming cactus, and tub of amaryllis. It is also used in filling window boxes, but it has almost wholly departed from the gardens. Fuchsias when well grown and trained against a wire screen are not only one of the most graceful and decorative outdoor plants, but when gathered on long sprays and arranged either in vases or laid on a white cloth as a table decoration seem fairly to drape themselves under one's fingers. The plants also are easy to keep from year to year in a light cellar or flower pit, and by cutting them back in spring, they make vigorous and almost vinelike growth. Storm King, Elm City, Surprise, and Mrs. Marshall are among the best, fairly covering themselves with scarlet, magenta, or rose and white flowers.

I gathered the first real bouquet of roses this morning,—splendid Jacqueminots, a few clear pink Anne de Diesbachs, and half a dozen moss buds and heavy tinted leaves from a bush that was very old even when father bought the place, and being ungrafted and on its own root has kept perpetual youth by aid of new suckers. It is always best when possible to plant ungrafted roses. Our seasons are so variable that in spite of covering, all but the sturdiest bushes are liable to die down below the graft; flowerless briars spring up undiscovered, so that the untutored may cherish them a whole season.

Of course no other flower can compete with the rose, except perhaps the carnation; that, owing to its qualities of endurance and fragrance, rich vivid or delicate colouring, is almost an equal. The greenhouse rose and the rose of the American garden are almost two different flowers, however. Of course, in England, with its humidity that always veils even though it does not obscure the sun's intensity, the outdoor conditions are more even and like those of a greenhouse. There the roses even of cottage gardens are perfect, thick fleshed, and sturdy, while the climate allows Gloire de Dijon and Marechal Neil to festoon second story windows unchecked, in company with white jasmine; and Marie Van Houtte, a tea rose, grows to the size of a great lilac bush.



Those who plant their rose garden with the memory of English roses blending with their dreams must be disappointed, as well as those who read the English garden papers telling of gathering La France buds outdoors in January, and then start out thinking to do likewise by buying the latest offerings of the "Yellow Journal" catalogues.

Of course the new bushes that we set out last fall will only show their colours and yield a few tardy buds this June, and it takes at least a two years' trial of a bush to prove its hardiness, colour, fragrance, and vigour of growth. But my present hope is in the old bushes that are proven, and as they bloom, I shall make a list of them to give to my friends who have small gardens and are always asking for the names of roses that are "not cranky."

Some of these bushes are old settlers, like the white moss, Harrison's yellow, the nameless wine-coloured rose of many petals, and Madame Plan-tier, the bush that Dan'l gave me so long ago, now grown a huge shrub, while its children trained as vines are mingling on the rose arbour with Baltimore Belle, climbing Victor Verdier, and the shell-pink, thornless blush rose, also an old-time favourite in English gardens. Some of the others are of



later fame, though all have borne the test of at least a score of years,—the original growth renewing itself from the root,—and one and all are faithful, satisfactory bloomers, asking only deep, rich soil, a shelter of cedar boughs in winter, a light April pruning, and two sprayings with weak whale oil soap-suds before the buds show colour, while in return they will yield armsful, apronsful, yes, clothes-basketsful, of roses.

*June 14.* Saturday. This morning as I was pottering among the roses, making ready for the June festival now beginning, by tying up a branch here and there, and seeing that the bushes were well supported in case heavy showers should come when the bloom was at its height, I heard a babel of voices that seemed to come from the wood lot in the direction of the wild walk.

I hastened down there because we have already transplanted many ferns and wild plants to the edge of the path, and the trees and bushes are full of nesting birds that I knew of old used to attract unregenerate school children on egg hunts bent, so that either father or Tim had been frequently obliged to patrol the place on Saturdays in May and June.

Guided by the voices, I soon came upon a group

of perhaps a dozen females standing about a stunted maple, gesticulating wildly. At the moment I appeared, as if obeying a signal, they sank to the ground in unison like a band of conspirators on the stage, and there remained squatting uncomfortably, the grass being deep and soaking wet, while they gazed at the maple.

For a moment I was nonplussed. The women ranged from youngish to middle aged, the chief conspirator (I judged her to be the chief because she stood up and pointed, though not with a dagger) was perhaps fifty; tall, lean, thin in the legs and hair, but wearing an untrimmed sailor hat, and a very short divided bicycle skirt. She carried a book and an opera glass, while a luncheon box was hung over one shoulder. Then I saw that all the others were equipped in a similar manner. As I went forward to warn them away, I heard the voice of the chief say:—

“Ladies, in that tree is the clay-lined nest of a wood thrush. The mother-bird is now brooding. In a few moments, when you have observed her patient immobility, I will see whether the nest contains eggs or young birds; if the latter, we may hope to observe the method of feeding and home sanitation practised by our feathered little sister in the bush.”

"Not while Barbara and six dogs are on the premises," I thought. Then the whole thing flashed across my intelligence. The conspirators were doing a Cook's Tour in Birdland! For a moment I expected to see the group arise solemnly, take hands and dance around the chief, singing: "Follow the man from Cook's," then I took action, steadying my voice, and using father's pacific formula for such cases.

"You probably are not aware that you are trespassing, but this is private ground," my voice becoming more emphatic as I saw that the thrush had left the nest, and was summoning assistance by means of her cluck of alarm, which was instantly answered by the nearby robins' "quick, quick," the veery's "whew" from the woods, the catbird's "miou" from the garden, as well as a chorus of others.

"Oh, not at all, not at all," said the chief, beaming upon me patronizingly. "That is, I mean we are not in any way trespassing. We are studying birds — a *Bird Class*, you know. Of course I was aware that this land belongs to the doctor, and that is the very reason why I have chosen it as the meeting place for my class for the next two weeks, as I hear that he has protected birds for a long period, so that more species can be found nesting in a small radius than in



any place conveniently near town. This fact guided my choice, for we've quite exhausted the city park; and later on we are going into the deep woods to observe the moulting, and to differentiate the plumage of young and adult birds. Ladies, look quickly! the female wood thrush is just above your heads, giving a tender maternal call to attract the attention of her young. Observe her smaller size, and the difference in the breast marks."

"That is not a female wood thrush," I asserted boldly. "It is a veery that has come up from the spring to help the wood thrush drive away intruders. If you were a red squirrel or a garter snake, you would get a good pecking, I can tell you; but as you are a human being, the thrush asks me to tell you to go away, and not come back."

"Really, this is most extraordinary!" gasped the chief. "Do you take no interest in bird study? This is the only method of learning their normal habits. Perhaps you would like to join my class. It might open a new vista before your unseeing eyes. I would take you at half rates if you are connected with the doctor's household."

My patience vanished. Ah, for a tomahawk to hurl! Lacking that, I used words.

"One moment, if you please, *before you leave*. I

am Barbara, the doctor's daughter, and I know the birds in this field and these woods as well as I do the fingers on my hands. So well do I know them that I will not have them worried, or their privacy invaded. Even if I did not object, it is useless for you to go about in a mob to try to learn a thing about them; for, so surrounded, not one of their actions would be normal. Two, even, is a crowd, if you wish to learn the ways of birds. How would you like to have a party of ten or a dozen people camp outside the window of your bath-room to 'observe' you? Would your actions be normal and unflurried?"

One of the young girls giggled, but still the chief would not retreat, and tried suavity.

"This is the new method of 'naming birds without a gun,' my child, instead of shooting the poor little things, to learn their names as wicked scientific men do."

"But even you haven't learned their names rightly it seems; so how can you teach these others? And I'm sure it's no worse to kill a few outright to be object lessons to hundreds in a museum, than to shatter the nerves of entire families, and addle unhatched eggs, as you are doing. Now I think I know why my pair of mourning doves deserted their

nest over in the pines last week. You've been observing them, too!"

The chief actually blushed, stammered, then led the retreat, which was made the more rapidly, as at that moment Bluff, Lark, and the hounds, having found my trail, nosed me out, and though naturally most polite dogs, something about the conspirators jarred upon them, and they said all the things that I could not say.

In the afternoon, in driving along the wood road with father, I came upon the party crouching by the wayside and evidently endeavouring to identify a large round nest well up in an oak tree by aid of a coloured picture book of birds' nests. I do not *think* they were successful because the nest happened to be the old winter home of a gray squirrel!

*June 15.* Rose Sunday. A gentle shower last night, together with a warm, hazy morning, has unloosened hundreds of buds, and the Rose Festival is now open. For two weeks at least we shall think and almost eat and drink roses. Nothing rare or wonderful, or large; merely plenty of good, healthy, old-fashioned roses, the only kind worth growing in the garden of the commuter's wife.

I gathered four bouquets from the great bushes this morning, one for the table, one for church, one for



father's desk in the study, and one for Martha Corkle, whom I found down in the garden before breakfast, gazing at the flowers in a state of pensive admiration. Martha has not had her usual spring and snap of late. I've been afraid the climate is too hot for her, and I was glad to have a chance to speak with her, out of doors.

"No, Mrs. Evan, I can't say as I do feel natural like. Some'ats come over me, and no disrespect intended, I think it's the beer, Mrs. Evan, or, I should say, the want o' it."

"What! beer?" I asked in alarm, visions of the stately Martha overcome by drink rising before me.

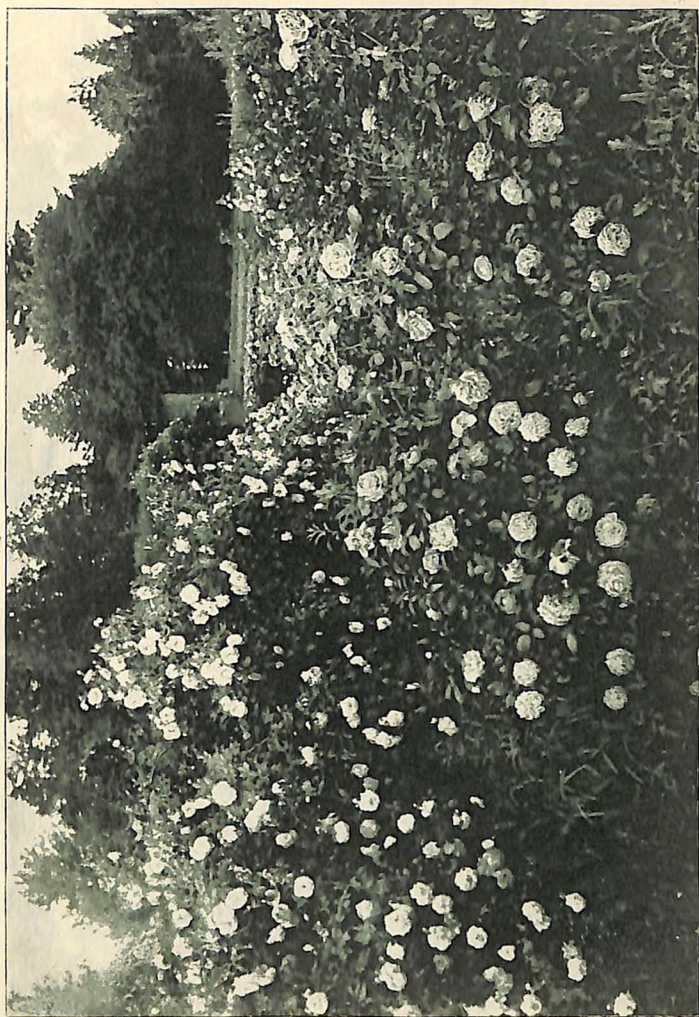
"Maybe you never knew or else disremember, Mrs. Evan, that in the old country we all had our allowance of ale or 'ome-brewed, the same which is meat and drink to the stomach, Mrs. Evan, mine as being house-keeper never being less than eight pints the week. Not that I blame you, Mrs. Evan; for how can the lady give out beer for one in a 'ouse that would upset another, Mrs. Evan, and I'd not take the responsibility of seein' it served to Delia, she bein' Irish and so hot-headed; and Eliza would take it to heart sore, she thinkin' all beers and liquors the Devil's dish-water, though she bein' herself one of the white cheese breed of women that a drop o' beer would



OLD SETTLERS

OLD SETTLERS







hearten. I've thought it over, Mrs. Evan, and I don't see the way clear to it, bein' the fault o' mixed races, and not yours, mum. For that matter, Timothy Saunders he says there isn't any 'ome-brewed to be got over here, the same bein' thin and watery, and I do claim there's no such thing for making one feel respect for the stomach as 'ome-brewed along with a lean cut o' beef."

Neither could I see the way, and I could understand her craving, though I had not before thought of the omission. Beer dealt out in the kitchen of a New England physician! and Martha was not one to take it secretly. Irrespective of the Village Liar and the Emporium, such a thing was not to be considered. Poor Martha, as well as the sundial, it seems, is the victim of changed conditions.

I turned the talk to the roses and gave her a bouquet for the blue and white ginger jar that she keeps for stray posies on the sill of the long window above the kitchen table, and promised her a row of geraniums to fill the shelf, a frilled curtain for the top, and a canary, — things that made the Somerset kitchen so quaintly attractive; for stiff as Martha is, she is not ashamed of loving flowers, in fact, such an idea would never occur to her. Still, I'm afraid that they will not be as "heartening" as the home-brewed.



I think this is a matter that I may bring before Evan without breaking my vow of never talking servants.

*June* 18. Evan says the beer question will adjust itself. Blessed faith of man! But then, I've observed things generally do, if not scattered and tossed about by argument like thistle balls in a gale.

I spend several hours every day now in arranging my flowers, for outdoor roses are blooms of a day that need frequent renewal. I have a special shelf in the pantry for this work, the tool house being overcrowded. I am also now realizing the benefits of a large supply of flower holders of various shapes and sizes. Not only have I inherited a whole family of blue and white bowls, the most fascinating receptacles for short-stemmed garden roses, and two darling India jars that belonged to father's mother, as well as some pieces of fine cut glass; but friends knew my foible, and my wedding gifts ran to vases, instead of coffee spoons and pie knives; while Evan has given me half a dozen inexpensive jars of a fine shade of dull green glass for holding heavy, long-stemmed flowers, like peonies, hollyhocks, and lilies.

The honeysuckles that wall the long walk on the northwest and drape the windows and porch

are in bloom, and the humming-birds only leave the feast the long-tubed flowers offer when dusk and the hawk moths appear together.

Is there anything more intoxicating than a great bowl of pink, red, and white roses that have been picked before the dew dries, all fringed and wreathed with honeysuckle? They go to my head as wine might, and when I bury my face in them I feel moved to dance and sing like a bacchante. I am a pagan these days, dazzled with colour, moved by sensations not logic, and ruled by the god Outdoors. Father says, however, that I am not a pagan at heart, but a Christian pantheist like himself, and moreover affirms it to be the most wholesome and sane of beliefs.

Evan carries a bouquet of roses to town daily, the name of Maypole which he acquired in lily-of-the-valley time still adhering to him. Some of the other commuters, *hoi polloi* with crumby chins and egg on their mustaches, cannot understand what a man, full grown, broad shouldered, and six feet in height, without symptoms of softening of the brain, should want with a perpetual bouquet. The man in question, considering it purely his own business, does not enlighten them by saying that he cares so much about having flowers on his

office table that he carries them gladly, and therefore is called eccentric.

I have always noticed that when people consider others eccentric, it is because they are revelling in some form of enjoyment that their critics can neither compass nor share, and there are no people so devoid of nature sentiment as the rank and file of commercial American males.

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*June 20.* Roses, and more roses! The arbour vines are rich with colour. I am almost glad that roses do not last all summer; they are so strenuous, they demand the best of everything, food lodging, care, and I should be worn out also with the prolonged luxury of the revel.

The sweet peas are beginning to fringe the trellis top, and bow and blush to the nasturtiums opposite, all swaying to and fro in a line on either side the path as if taking sides in the country-dance that follows the minuet of the courtly roses, and marks the entry of the glowing, less aristocratic summer flowers of July and August.

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I've been watching a pair of song sparrows for two weeks past, and have arrived at the conclusion that



there are birds of defective judgment as well as people. This couple evidently were either young and undecided, or for some other reason late in mating, and they did not build their nest between the roots of a shrub or in a sturdy bush as well-conducted song sparrows should do, but balanced it almost at the end of a branch of a rose bush that would surely bend over as the roses opened and grew heavy. To-day the inevitable happened. A shower bent the bush, and the eggs rolled out and were broken. I reproach myself, for I should have tried to prop up the nest, but I thought that they knew their business. However, it is only June, and it may teach them to plan better next time.

*June 30.* The hardy border roses are practically over, a great storm last night having scattered the ripened bloom upon the ground in a foam of red, white, and rose-coloured petals. The arbour has not yet reached perfection, and the summer roses in the four corner beds of the sun garden are sending up strong shoots set thick with buds.

We have made our list of satisfactory hardy, fragrant roses that we have tested up to date. I will write it in my Garden Boke so that I may not forget when people ask me about them. Some of the bushes are now too old and woody to yield large

flowers, but we shall simply renew them in kind, and avoid experiments as far as possible. A hundred of such bushes are all that a woman gardener, even with a wide ambition, can manage either to plant, suitably care for, or to gather and give away the flower crop, while fifty will yield almost equal joy. Of white we have Madame Plantier, Bath Moss, Coquettes des Blanches, and Coquette des Alpes; pink — Centifolia, the hundred-leaved Provence Rose, Magna Charta, Anne de Diesbach, Paul Neyron (the child of Anne de Diesbach and Victor Verdier), and La Reine; dark red — Baron de Bonstettin, Duke of Albany, Camille de Rohan; deep bright crimson — Alfred Colomb, Jacqueminot, Fischer Holmes, and Marie Bauman. Of the mosses, both the common and crested.

These roses grown outdoors of course must have shorter stems, and fade and drop their petals sooner than their indoor brothers. Others may have finer, and the Italian garden on The Bluffs disports two thousand rose trees, but these are my very own to love and gather and give away; their faults, even, are born of the shortcomings of the climate of my own country. In short, they are my children, and therefore none others can be so lovable.

Late this afternoon a young coloured girl of a very

humble family came to the door and asked for me. Her sister is to be married to-night, and she came all a-giggle to beg a bouquet for "de bride. Roses, an' horse-hair ferns, an' you please, missis; dem's what de quality most allers carries."

I took my scissors and was about to gather a gay bunch of the brightest that remained, when a voice at my elbow said, "Could yo' spare dem white uns climbin' on de clo'se rack yander? Sis is so pertikeler to have dem 'propriate, an' she done want no common colours to break luck,—all nice white roses,—an' I've brought a sash to tie 'em jes' like hern, if you'd be so good's to bow it on. Folks reckon down town you've got such a way o' techin' things."

Thus beguiled, I arranged a graceful bouquet of Madame Plantier, unlike the stiff pyramid of my first intention, fringed it round about with moss buds and maidenhair,—wild, to be sure,—and tied it firmly with string, then held out my hand for the ribbon, rebuking myself the while for smiling at the dark woman's desire for the symbolic white. Wasted twinge of conscience, as many New England twinges are! The "sash" was fully two yards long and of intense scarlet!



## XIV

### JULY

#### THE BED OF SWEET ODOURS

*July 2.* I think it was Jefferies who said, "The sowing of life in the springtime is not in the set straight line of the drill." Surely every one must realize this, who lives close to Nature and watches her mobility, for the incoming of growth envelops both the cultivated and the wild garden of the field and wood like the returning tide that first creeps wildly hither and thither, covering the open flats, and merely curling about the higher places, until finally gathering sudden force, every bar and promontory is suddenly submerged by the wave of colour, so that we scarcely realize that the tide is high until it is well-nigh ready to ebb again.

To-day for the first time in a month I have sat under the Mother Tree, with folded hands, passively drinking in the beauty of my garden without feeling spurred to do so much as tie up a vine. The last bit of summer sowing is over, the planting of the third

instalment of gladiolus bulbs, the other two having been set in middle May and June successively. These I have grouped in close circles of six, so that when ready to bloom in late September they may be tied to a central stake, making a sort of bush instead of having the military stiffness of single specimens.

As I leaned back against the tree trunk and looked up through the twigs, where the sun rays fluttered among the leaves, I saw that a new branch, as yet slender and unformed, is springing from the trunk beside the wound left by the limb that was rent in the great snowstorm. To me, the wonder of perpetual renewal is as great as ever. That is the stimulus of nature; it is never, never old, and always developing. Even the scarred, wrinkled earth herself is a mere infant among the old ladies and gentlemen that tread foot-paths in the sky; and I dare say that she is frequently rebuked by her sun-mother, for frivolity, besides having to listen to long tales of happenings in the good old days when she was an immature, roly-poly fire ball without a rock in her head.

It is delicious sometimes to do nothing simply for its own sake. As I leaned luxuriantly back and alternately looked down the vista of the long walk toward the sun garden and into the rose arbour, then closing my eyes and merely breathing in fragrance

and sound, I was no longer the commuter's wife who breakfasts at seven, and is obliged to, partly at least, observe the conventionalities, but a Lotus Eater listening to the nightingale. I'm not at all sure that flower and bird inhabit the same country, but I'm sure they ought to.

I did not care a particle as to which flowers gave the perfume or what birds the music. I was simply saturated with both, and resolving not to move until afternoon, I must have fallen asleep; for the next thing I knew, I was startled by an emphatic bump on the head, caused by a falling apple and Bertle's voice, which said, "The young cabbage-flowers are of the beautifullest. It should much pleasure you to see she."

Vegetables are a most wholesome and necessary adjunct to a flower garden, though of course there are people who would transpose this sentiment. I went immediately to see the cauliflowers, and at once became enveloped in a contrasting atmosphere of bean poles, pea brush, tomato trellis, and cabbages, where mathematical preciseness and the straight lines of beets, carrots, lettuce, and parsley drew my wandering vision into focus again. As to the cauliflowers, I could honestly admire "she," milk-white in a crisp green setting, and surely the rosy



beets with their colour running well up into the foliage, and the delicate, translucent green of the long heads of Trianon Cos lettuce are beautiful, while the great bunches of ripening currants bring as fine a colour to the vegetable garden as the oriental poppy lends the parterre. Then, too, the vegetable garden has, to counteract the pungent breath of cauliflower and cabbage, a fragrant bouquet all its own, that is distilled nightly by the dew, the breath of sage, thyme, sweet marjoram, basil, and lavender.

Yes, I am a pagan, as I have often suspected. I have a material streak in me that finds intense satisfaction in soup vegetables and pot herbs as well as roses and honeysuckle. Sickness alone deprives me of my appetite, and I have never yet been so sad or sentimental that I felt a loathing for my luncheon. I think father and Evan encourage this materialism in me, and so does Martha Corkle, who sees that luncheon comes to me if father is not at home and outdoors bids fair to hypnotize me.

Father says that hungry sentiment develops melancholy, but well-fed sentiment, enthusiasm; so I suppose that I must be an enthusiast.

There are four great pleasures of gardening — the planting, the development, the gathering, and the

distributing. Each one in **its** turn seems the keenest, and surely the last is **not** the least; for what is life worth if one has nothing to give away? This lack, it seems to me, must be the sharpest pang of poverty.

Then, too, garden gifts are all pleasure — light and slight matter-of-course gifts that carry no impediment of obligation with them; for one may give a whole basket of home-grown flowers when a mere handful, if purchased, would be an intrusion. Here again, in order to fulfil its destiny, the garden must be dual, — flower and vegetable; for there is always a neighbour whose peas are affected with weevils, whose lettuce has run prematurely to seed, or a dear old farmer crank at the hospital who has fallen from the hay-mow and fractured a rib or leg (this seems a favourite midsummer pastime of farmers past middle age; the young ones fall from cherry trees), who is “pinning for garden sass” or a “good dish of beets and raw onions with plenty of cider vinegar.” Not to mention my Lady of the Bluffs, who, I know of old, would stray out from father’s office, where she had called, and levy upon the necessary leaf, fruit, or berry for some desired entrée.

It is strange oftentimes to see how little the

gardens of the rich yield them, even in satisfaction in proportion to the outlay; but perhaps it is well, else we middlings would have no ground upon which to meet them, which would deprive us of much merriment.

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I lunched in the garden to-day, and Martha served me with her own hands, a mark of attention denoting either special favour or a desire for the opportunity of private discourse. Really she is not as plump as she was, and though she says nothing, I sometimes feel the ghost of the "'ome-brewed" is between us.

She arranged the little table that we keep under the rose arbour for after-dinner coffee quite deftly in the breeziest corner, and had brought out the tray before I realized what she was about. But as my look of inquiry was unanswered, I asked more as a form than from a desire for information, "Where is Delia?"

"She is not feeling exactly herself, Mrs. Evan," Martha replied, stopping short with pursed-up lips, evidently hesitating between merely answering the question and opening a conversation.

"I wonder why she didn't tell me she was ill," I said half to myself.



"I'll not go so far as to call her *hill*, Mrs. Evan, but shook up and scattered like, and she took the chance of slippin' down to speak with the priest about it, while he would be in at his dinner, the same which I call a liberty, having ought to ask you."

Shaken? scattered? priest? I could not unravel the matter, so I told Martha to explain, as she was so evidently anxious to do.

"Well, it's this way, Mrs. Evan, for it's not listening and tattling to repeat what is spoken aloud to those who has a right to hear. When Delia broke with Patrick Doolan the night before she thought to hear the banns read, she was glad enough for a while, free in her mind and well content to be rid of him. After a time, howsomever, the waste of her wedding gown, as it were, set heavy on her; for you see, Mrs. Evan, it were all made and ready even to the neck frill, blue silk trimmed out with white lace, and a white hat, with a plume that long" (measuring the length of her arm) "all curled up around it.

"I said as there were other men to marry, to comfort her, as it were; but she says, 'Mrs. Corkle, what's other men to me so long as they doesn't ask me, and my dress going out of style from

backs coming in fuller, which can't be changed, it being a remnant?' The same being quite the truth, Mrs. Evan.

"Then she took down-hearted, and news kept comin' to her that Patrick had never done a day's work since Hallowe'en and was drinking most shocking. 'I never thought he was that fond o' me,' she'd keep saying, and rocking to and fro, 'and it's I that was a fool to throw away me luck, and a fine house, too.'

"'I kenned it was yersel' was throwed, hoose and a', said Timothy Saunders, unfortunate-like, one night. So for a while she kept her trouble to herself, out of stiff pride.

"Last night I was sitting down to my needle, when some one knocked, and I opened the door to a respectable looking body dressed out quite decent in black. Before I learned her business she was past me, to where Delia sat at the machine, and a-kneeling before her, crying and taking on not fit or proper for a woman of her years.

"Mrs. Evan, if it was not old Mrs. Doolan begging Delia to marry her son to save him from death by drink and disappointment, then Corkle isn't dead and I his widow!

"Mrs. Evan, Delia gave her promise all too ready-

like, I'm thinking, and the two went out crying together, to run down Patrick, whose whereabouts I mistrusted was undecided."

"Is the old woman going to give them the farm?" I asked, quite confounded at the turn of affairs, for I thought Bertle was consoling Delia.

"That she is not! She says that Delia may live in with her, and that she'll not object to her takin' up work in the shop, if she feels like keepin' independent." Here a fine sneer of derision curved Martha's nostrils.

"And the boil-down of it all is that Delia is going to be fool enough not only to marry a man what's at best a burnt match, and now confessed always in liquor, but she's going in with the old party, Mrs. Evan, who will undertake to see her work to keep him idle." Here Martha gave the tray a little push toward me, as if she thought it time to change the subject.

"I will speak to father: he will never allow Delia to throw herself away like this."

"Best not, Mrs. Evan. The doctor is clever, no doubt, but this marryin' rascals is a disease beyond him, especially when the parties is Irish, for I knows them well and thorough; they blows hot and cold so quick, it keeps hothers all of a shiver, and



when you reaches out the 'elpin' 'ands, it's not me nor you can tell if it's a kiss or a knife they'll meet.

"What does concern me is this, the seein' you inconvenienced by changes in hot weather, Mrs. Evan. Delia should give her proper month's warning, but instead she's took her bank-book and gone down to the priest to get him to speak with Patrick and hurry the wedding without the calling of banns, if it may so be.

"Now, Mrs. Evan, Timothy Saunders's sister's girl, Effie, is leaving service in Canada and is looking to crossing to the States, having written her uncle to speak for her where he is acquainted. Which same I bid him do, but he being so backward, I'll venture it for him, that you might try her, the same making less of a mixed family, you know, ma'am."

I assented, thanked Martha, and she departed. As the luncheon was a cold one, it had not suffered by delay. An egg and lettuce salad, waferlike sandwiches of ham and chicken, strawberries heaped on their own leaves, hulls on, with sugar to dip them in, and a glass of milk. As I ate leisurely, thinking of Delia the while, Bluff came up for crusty bits, as a matter of course, but The Orphan seated himself at a distance and sniffed

until I called him. That last arrival is a curious character study, a self-made dog, deserving admiration for his reserve, but much like a person whom it takes years to outlive a youth of deprivation. When he first came to us, after living between coal-box and wall in the flagman's house, he did not understand having space to move about in, and so he continually backed solemnly into corners. I love Bluff, but I can only respect The Orphan, who is old before his time, and while faithful, yet is too humble, and lacks the spontaneity that makes young children and animals lovable.

The air grew cooler in the early afternoon and light clouds gave a grateful half-veiled atmosphere that coaxed me to leave the tree and stroll to the sun garden. Our scheme of grouping the spectrum colours about the dial is a complete success, for the zinnias are blooming evenly and the blue centaurea matching them in height, the effect is at once rich and unusual. Amid all the wealth of colour, the blaze of light reflected from low-growing portulacca, nasturtium, geraniums, and the first buds of many-hued hollyhocks, it is through the nose more than the eye that I am guided to where lowering clouds are casting a few drops upon the bed of sweet odours, thus completing the fragrant spell.

Without such a bed no garden is completely gracious, and yet few there are, pretentious or humble, that have one. When Evan designed the beds of the sun garden, he said that the tire of the fiery wheel should be of subdued colours, shaded greens or at most half tones. For a moment it seemed that the dreaded coleus would be inevitable; then my Familiar Spirit whispered, "Let this circle be your bed of sweet odours."

There are comparatively few wholly scentless flowers, while there are many like hyacinths and the ranker lilies whose heavy perfume closes the house door upon them. These last, however, have a very limited period of bloom, while the plants chosen for my bed of sweet odours breathe fragrance from frost going until its return and even after.

There are only three colours but many tints in this bed of mine, green,—silvery, velvety, and glossy; violet, purple, and ruddy-gold. The plants are, reckoned from tallest downwards, lemon verbena, rose, nutmeg, and apple geraniums, heliotrope of violet to mauve, annual wall-flowers of warm yellow, and mignonette; this last being of three kinds,—Mammoth, Parson's white, and Machette.

Though the plants were set in rows each of a kind, with the shrubby lemon verbenas as a ridge-pole,



and the mignonette edging the whole, by middle June they were so blended that the earth was completely hidden. Now with the greenery in luxurious leaf, heliotrope and mignonette in bloom, this bed holds more subtle fascination than any other. Heliotrope is best enjoyed at morning and evening, when the dew holds its fragrance earthward, for when gathered it withers quickly, and if mingled with other flowers in vase or jar, blackens and seems to poison the water, causing the whole posy to droop. In its bed it is one of the generous contributions to the charm of the garden of night that lures us abroad under the summer moon.

For the rest, the bed of sweet odours is most pickable, and its foliage gives the crowning touch of sympathy to each bouquet. For tea roses I choose geranium leaves; for sweet peas, a fringe of mignonette, with long sprays of lemon verbena for asters and old-fashioned hardy blossoms; while the wall-flowers should flock quite alone, bunched in small glass globes, that they may lose nothing of their potency. I have grown this last flower a dozen years, and yet it seems either quite unknown, or else set aside for its more showy perennial brother, that in this climate needs winter housing. This humble annual, if sown early and if the season is not too

wet, blooms from July until snow hides it, and I once remember gathering a delicious bunch on a Christmas morning.

In a nook of this darling bed of mine hides a silvery cut-leaved plant, a mascot that I hope will thrive and soon hold a braver place. This plant is rosemary, the flower of remembrance. I brought this little root from Shottery, and it is planted here in remembrance of the glory of the literature of the mother tongue and of all true lovers.

If flowers make a garden, so also do the greens that form their setting, and I now find the wild space beyond the sun garden inseparable from the cultivated in this matter. The madonna lilies now in perfect bloom, when gathered, need delicate maidenhair and lady ferns for company, while hollyhocks set in the great India jars should emerge from a mass of vigorous brakes in order to hide their usual shabbiness of stalk.

*July 16.* Full moon, and both single and double hollyhocks at height. All day long the garden is a-bloom under full pressure of the sun and frequent showers, and the bright moon so carries day into night that we often stay out until the striking of the magic hour, and even then I linger at my lat-

tice window, for below lies the moonlit garden, an etching framed by trees.

For a week past Evan and I have been wandering in the garden of night, as we call it, and continually meeting surprises in familiar places. One of the alcoves in the border of the long walk is filled with yellow evening primroses mingled with the starry, long-tubed flowers of white tobacco (*nicotiana affinis*). Both of these open at sunset, a time when sweet peas furl their butterfly wings and many other plants contract both flower and leaf; then all through the night they give forth the fragrance that lures their insect lovers, so that above them is a perpetual flight of moths, while the blending of gold and silver under the moon-spell defies description. The most gorgeous of red, crimson, pink, blue, and purple flowers grow dark at night in proportion to their daytime richness, and it is to the light colours alone that the garden then owes its beauty.

Night before last we were wandering about the garden, peering in corners where masses of hollyhocks that had strayed without border bounds reflected moonlight from their disks, and great spiders spread their webs across open spaces and hung in waiting, savagely patient while the dew turned their homespun into cloth of gold.



Suddenly a snapping noise seemed to drop from a spruce tree overhead. There was a ponderous flapping of wings and a note of warning that sounded like the passing of a broom across a sanded floor. The tree was half in deep shadow, but after a few moments we could see the outline of some stocky birds that were sitting in a row upon a limb close to the trunk. Another cry, a flapping and shifting, and we named them screech owls, and their number five, evidently two parents and three owlets. Then the dance began.

If I had ever doubted the capacity of animals for play, I should now be converted. Of course a habit of gambolling is common enough among dogs, cats, and the intelligent quadrupeds, but I had never before suspected the solemn owl of such humour, and shall in future regard it as a professional wag of great ability.

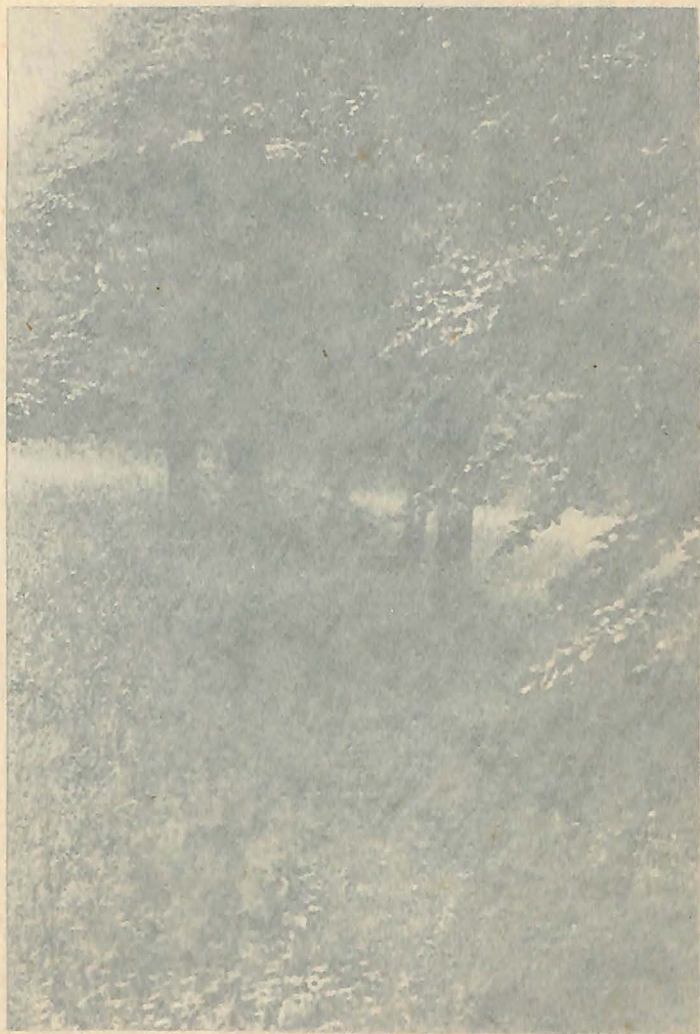
At first the old birds mystified their children by separating and giving the "get to cover" cry from separate trees. This seemed to be by way of emergency drill, and lasted half an hour, until at the signal the youngsters stopped flopping about aimlessly and flew direct.

They were quite fearless and did not object to our presence in the least. In fact, as we tried to

follow their erratic course through the garden and wood lot, and along the grassy walk that, edged by daisies, seemed a pathway to the moon direct, they seemed to take delight in seeing how nearly it was possible to fly into our faces without absolutely touching us.

Once safe in the fastness of hemlocks and spruces, their tactics changed. Perching five in a row upon a downward sloping branch, they pushed and jostled each other until the one nearest the end was crowded off. Instantly it flew to the top of the line and took its turn at edging, until each had slipped off many times. When at last they became tired of this aerial coasting, they silently disappeared in the darkness of the woods.

*July 22.* The owl play still continues nightly, and Evan and I take part in it and likewise gain a fine view of their antics by flashing a small electric search-light into the deep shadows, thus catching grotesque poses and their amazed and dazed expressions. Last night two of the owlets ventured close to the house, and sat for some time a-top the clothes poles, turning their heads about so completely that they threatened to wring their own necks; then snapping their beaks, they crooned, and conversed quite plainly in high class owl, much to Bluff's indigna-



THE GRASSY WALK THAT EDGED BY DAISIES SEEMED A  
PATHWAY TO THE MOON



THE GRASSY WALK THAT EDGED BY DAISIES SEEMED A  
PATHWAY TO THE MOON







tion, until he howled furiously and dashed at the poles so desperately that they lurched away, uttering unmistakable swear words.

\* \* \* \* \*

This is hollyhock week, and the forest of gayly draped stalks flanks half the length of the long walk, overflows the corner of the bank wall, and straggles in a crowd toward the barn, where it forms a hollow square about the chicken house. The hollyhock disports all colours and tints, — white, pink, cerise, crimson, apricot, yellow, and blush, both with a decided pink eye and a rosily diffused centre.

Having been let alone for several years, the single or half double flowers predominate, and I am quite sure that I prefer them to the heavy double blossoms, whose chief claim is their solidity of form and colour; otherwise they are nearer kin to the paper roses that garnish Christmas mutton than to garden flowers.

The phloxes that have massed themselves regardless of colour, are showing bloom, — white, crimson, white with crimson eye, and dull purple. Neither in colour nor form are they as handsome as the young plants we set out last October, among which many new shades of cherry, salmon, and rose appear.

Phloxes especially require frequent resetting, else

they crowd themselves out, the flower clusters grow small, while they lapse to the parent colours from which they were hybridized more rapidly than other hardy plants. Now are the nasturtiums rampant, and their trellis seems consumed with a flame that reaching over has caught the salvia tips. The annuals that I bought from the "Yellow Journal" catalogue are making a fine showing, having an alcove all to themselves, and Evan almost acknowledges that the Pekin Perfection Carnation Poppy is gorgeous, "at least at present," he added cynically.

The first planting of gladiolus is in bloom, and I have been surprised and fascinated by the beauty of the new hybrids. Here, too, the range of colour covers everything but blue, and the exquisitely shaded and veined flowers, no longer contracted and stiff, but winged and poised gracefully on the stalks, seem more like a new discovery than a development.

The moon gets up late nowadays, having a slantwise, rakish look, and I am often tempted to leave bed for my window where I could sit for hours listening to the owlets' shivery laugh and looking down at the groups of striped and spotted eulalia that shimmer like fountains in the moonlight. Delia, who is to be married on Sunday evening, she having failed to get her dispensation owing to the reluctance

of the bridegroom, has asked me to have the owls killed, as, if they cross her path the night of the wedding, ill luck will surely follow her. A nice way to cast the sure result of her own folly upon Fate impersonated by me! But the owls are quite safe.

\* \* \* \* \*

The improvident song sparrows that built in the rose spray have not learned wisdom by experience. Yesterday afternoon as the wind that foretells a shower was sweeping the garden, Bertle discovered their second nest, in which were three young birds. It was set squarely upon a broad corymb of feverfew which, having gone to seed, was ready to snap at any moment and the other foliage that had sheltered it was beaten down. Silly sparrows! In whose garden were you raised? Were there no honest bushes there?

We slipped an improvised platform under the nest and braced it with four corner stakes using an inverted strawberry box as a canopy, making a structure that, as Evan said, looked like the judge's box on a race track. The birds seemed satisfied, however, and stayed by the nest, which was thus enabled to weather the storm.

I believe that those sparrows were orphans and



double first cousins raised by a maiden aunt in a garden of flimsy foliage beds. Nothing else can justify their dementia. I wonder if they will make another nesting venture this season and where it will be.

\* \* \* \* \*

*July 29.* Delia was married at seven last evening. The gods were not propitious, for it rained, though of course the fact that the wedding gown was still fashionable was the main thing.

A funereal city hack containing the groom and bridesmaid came to the side door, and as I bade Delia good-by, in pity I pretended not to see that the redness of the groom's face was from other causes than bashfulness. The bride was white as her ostrich plume, and unluckily, as they drove out the gate, a mischievous owl gave a perfectly audible though distant hoot.

Mrs. Mullins dropped in this morning to "give me the news" and a fragment of very boggy wedding cake.

"Sure, Miss Barbara darlint, 'tis bad to be shifty moinded altogether, and that's what them three are, mother, son, and Dalia. I'm looking for loively times betuchen them. 'Six to one,' says I to Mullins, 'if Dalia isn't in the onion fields agin spring, like the

old woman used herself! Then do yer mind the three bad omens, darlint?"

"The rain and the owl," I answered, "but what was the third?"

"Oh, wherra! wherra! Crowin' hens is common, but the likes o' the last doin's is seldom known, though I onct heard it out o' County Kerry, that same bein' next me own.'

"Old woman Doolan she mischanced to raise a pair o' crowin' hens lasht fall, and all the neighbours has beseeched her to kill them lest ill luck befall the sittlement, goin' so far as to beg the priest to interfere. But not an axe would she take to them, they bein' foine layers.

"What's amiss wid crowin' hens? Shure now, that's aisy. Ye know well the cock that crew three times and give the lie to St. Peter to his shamin'? Well, the blessed saint cursed him well for his impudence and turned him to a hen, the mother o' the whole lot, and that's why, himself doing it, the curse holds that firm that holy water itself can't dissholve it.

"Now what does the old devil do, unbeknownst but only to me on account of the knot-hole, she being stingy, but kill thim hins for the weddin' faste! Did ye ever hear the loikes? For we all

knows that of a sprinklin' o' holy water even won't break the power o' crowin' hens, 'tis a mortal sin to touch them. So, says I to meself, 'It's the same as aitin' death'; and though they was biled and dressed wid onions, I come from the feast fastin', but Dalia she ate her fill!"



## XV

### AUGUST

#### A PLEA FOR A WILD LAWN

*August 5.* Effie has come and dropped so quickly into our needs and ways that even the good points possessed by Delia, being at best "writ in water," are quite obliterated. Effie has lived for two years in medical families overseas, one being that of a real M.D. and surgeon, the other only a medical man. I wish that I could compass this English professional distinction, but I cannot. However, as far as Effie is concerned, it suffices to say that she is fully impressed with the importance of remembering a message and writing the names and needs of callers upon the record pad in a firm angular hand which is one of the best results of the public education of British females. Likewise she has the gift of afternoon tea making, knowing after a single lesson the quality of August day when cracked ice and lemon should be served instead of milk, and quite agreeing with my taste, that many

consider whimsical, which prefers good milk to cream, as the latter cloyes the palate and destroys the flavour of really fine tea.

I am glad that there is no possibility of my Garden Boke ever falling under the eye of a critic even as comprehensive as Evan, for the question would surely rise, Why so much of domestic affairs in an outdoor annal? As both in- and out-door life are equal members of the body vital, they must be in perfect harmony to produce that even mental circulation known as happiness. The mutual discomfort of having either state awry is as unsatisfactory as warming one's fingers at a cheerful blaze at the same time that one's feet are in a tub of ice water.

\* \* \* \* \*

The garden is *en fête* these days. In an equable season like this, August is the gala of the spring-sown annuals as well as of many perennials of the hot summer colours.

Scarlet, and its allied tints, that started with the oriental poppies, is now represented by the vivid nasturtium and geranium hues, shooting its tongue of flame in salvias and gladioli, while the phloxes that outline the long walk are now at their best and run through all the shades of lake and car-

mine to purplish lavender, the same colours appearing as eyes in the white varieties.

Yet even where scarlet and magenta almost meet, the antagonism is averted and turned to barbaric splendour by the groups of glowing golden rudbeckia that combines in its blooms the richest of sunflower colour, with Dahlia solidity, and the long stems of specimen chrysanthemums.

The auratum lilies planted last November are coming forward finely. They were grouped mainly in the bulb beds below the study windows, where they came the earliest in bloom. But for an experiment I scattered a couple of dozen bulbs at random, through the beds of the long walk, and the effect of the great golden-banded, ruby-spotted flowers is magical, giving depth of focus to the maze of phlox, as well as the thrill of oriental suggestion that the lily and iris tribes always bring with them. In an old-fashioned garden such as mine, this result must be by suggestion only; for if it is allowed to dominate, it becomes incongruous, and would wholly denationalize the garden. This is why Evan bars palms, caladiums, castor beans, and all such growths, only allowing the graceful eulalias as an equivalent of the humbler old-time ribbon grass.



*August 8.* This is the month for gathering flowers, not as individuals, but in masses, when a sickle is often more serviceable than scissors. In fact, this morning I possessed myself of a mass of phlox and golden glow in this manner, and filled the study fireplace with them most effectively without rearrangement, using an old stoneware jug, to hold the water. So often the best effects in decoration come from transferring the flowers indoors without disturbing their natural pose. Gather an armful of goldenrod, for instance, put it in a jar, with only a loosening shake to adjust it, and the most careful spray by spray arrangement will not yield equal grace.

The dogs are happy again, being free of the garden, for now that the ground is everywhere covered, instinct seems to keep them to the walk, and Bluff hardly gives a tail wag of apology, when he joins me, stepping carefully between the rows, or sitting gazing at me with apparent interest, as I fill my basket from the beds of the long walk.

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That we have the poor always with us, is one of the most daily evident of the Master's truths,

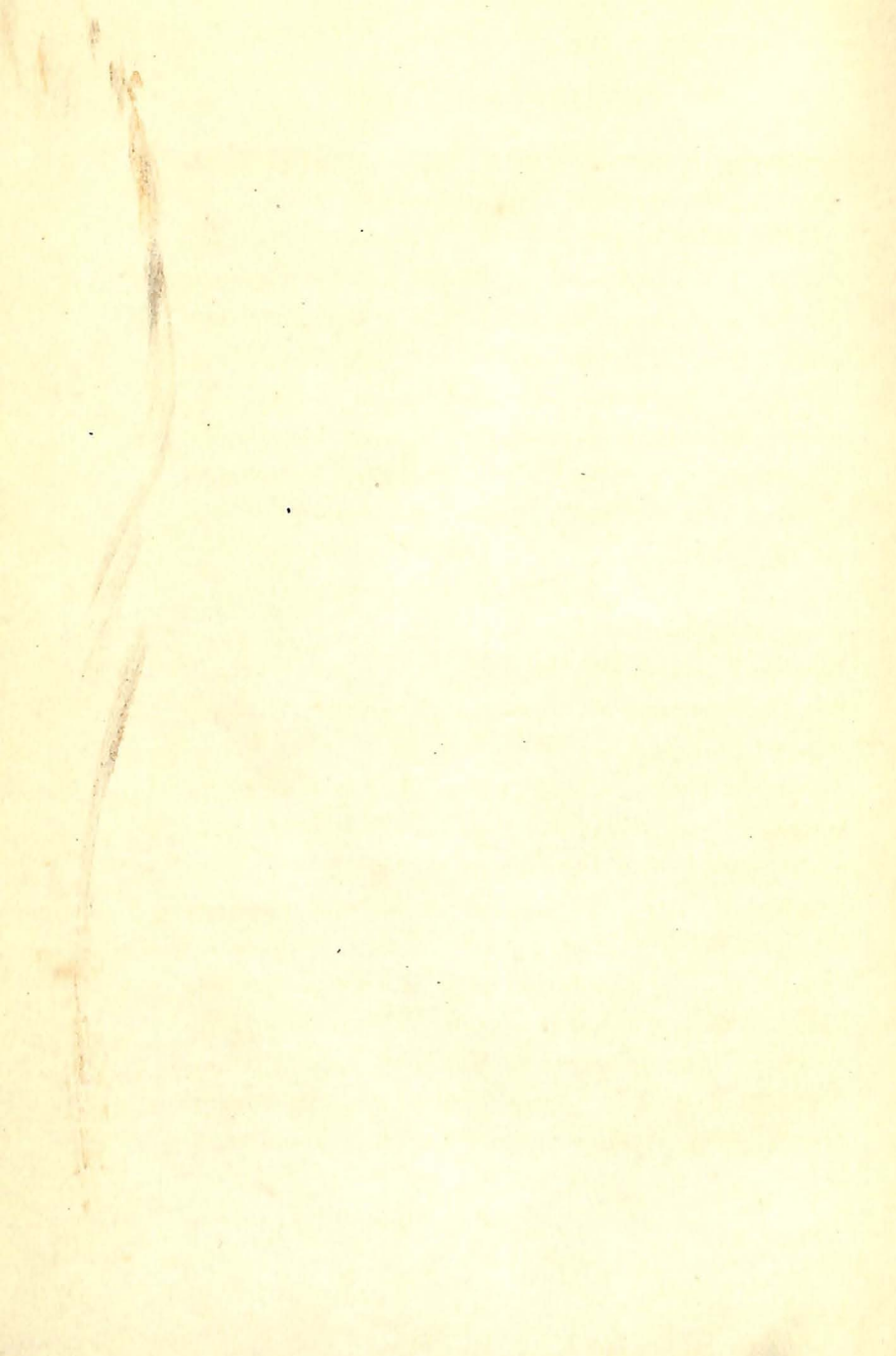


BLUFF HARDLY GIVES A TAIL WAG OF APOLOGY

BLUFF HARDLY GIVES A TAIL WAG OF APOLOGY







especially if the term is allowed, as it must be, to cover the inefficient. The illustrations in point usually come to me from the hospital or the factory cottages, but once again the offenders belong to the world of garden birds. Those poor misguided song sparrows have built their third nest, three feet above ground in a bush of golden glow, at the junction of a twisted stalk with the supporting string and stake! This morning I well-nigh dumped out the four eggs in trying to straighten the plant.

I had a mind to leave them to their fate, but who would risk the lives of four possible song sparrows that may return and bring joy to a gloomy March day, for the sake of giving their parents a moral lesson?

Not Barbara, surely, so I made a very neat structure of double mosquito net, a sort of skeleton nest, and fastened it by the corners to four slender bamboo stakes, very much as a redwing blackbird hangs his home between the reeds.

With Bertle's aid I slipped it under the toppling nest so that it was made secure without altering its location. The sparrows did not seem alarmed in the slightest, and this afternoon they are alternately brooding and feeding cheerfully upon the crumbs of



dog biscuit that are always plentiful about the kennels. I must tell Tim that this biscuit makes the best bird food that he can scatter about the barnyard and hayricks in winter.

I'm wondering if these are Severely Protestant, clerical song sparrows who think the world owes them a living, and so thrust their progeny at it alms-basinwise! Well, I think it does, as far as the sparrows go, when you take their joy-giving qualities into consideration, which is certainly less often the case with their human prototypes.

\* \* \* \* \*

Three new blossoms are this month added to the garden of night, — one, the moon flower, a half hardy convolvulus, festooning some poles that are joined by light rods on either side of the long walk, while the other two are silvery pink petunias and white, pink, and yellow four-o'clocks that fill in the alcove between the evening primroses and nicotiana.

The sweet peas still yield even more flowers than I can comfortably pick, and Evan comes to my aid every evening, though very soon now our after-dinner gardening will have to be done by either moon or lantern light.

I wish that I could have an interview with the

Equinoxes and the Chief Engineer of the Earth's Orbit, and persuade them to alter its grade, especially on the curves, so that all the long days might be bunched between May first and October, and thus some hours of light be stolen from March and April for the benefit of August and September.

The dark mornings and evenings of early fall and winter are one of the trials of the commuter and his wife that can only be overcome by a large supply of "sweetness and light."

The garden of books, to be sure, mitigates and consoles the evening end, but as for the morning from November to March, even the always questionable consolation of the fact that the "early bird catches the worm" is quite valueless. The commuter who lives at a reasonable distance can only console himself with knowing that he has had at least an hour more sleep than if he lived in town, and his wife's reward lies in her power to keep her promise of sending him off well nourished and trim, no list of errands in his pocket, no egg on his mustache, and no crumb, but merely an invisible kiss on his chin.

Alack that this short time between seven and eight A.M. should be the downfall of so many well-ordered lives! Last winter after the great storm Evan

christened this time the "philosophical hour," saying that as under modern pressure one needs to give an hour out of every twenty-four to this cult, the earlier it comes in the day, the better.

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*August 20.* I have realized anew the almost spiritual beauty of the common morning-glory. I avoided planting these flowers anywhere about the garden, because they seed so freely that they soon become an annoyance, strangling more important plants, and even tangling up the vegetables mischievously. Instead, I have given them a screen that breaks the bareness of the tool house, and let them run riot. The leaves are not especially notable, being rather coarse; but the flowers are as exquisite in their richly coloured fragility as if Aurora, in the bath, had amused herself by blowing bubbles. These, catching the sunrise glow, floated away upon the breeze, and falling on a wayside vine, opened into flowers that from their origin vanish again under the sun's caress.

Among all their colours none is more beautiful or usual than the rich purple with the ruddy throat merging to white—night shadows melting into the clear of dawn.



August is one of the few growing months when the female gardener may, without neglecting her posies, if she chooses, attire herself becomingly, sit on the porch in idleness, and read a novel.

To be sure, work is still to be done, but the weeding and tying to stakes is not so violently necessary as heretofore. The building of the cold pit, a sort of small, sunken greenhouse, in the bank south of the barn, is being conducted by Bertle with a carpenter to help him, though of course the cuttings that are to be kept in it must soon be set in sand to root.

I was thus lounging and reading a novel,—not a new one, for, thank Heaven, my hardy perennials in this line have not given out, but “Christian’s Mistake,” one from my Tauchnitz family that live together in one bookcase, wearing a cheerful uniform of half red morocco,—when father drove up, and, without first going to consult his office pad, seated himself opposite me with a perturbed look upon his face.

I smiled encouragingly, and was instantly prepared to supply any need, from flowers through fruit and soup to baby linen, the last “loan basket” of which, after having been nicely laundered, was enjoying an unusual rest.

"I have a very special favour to ask of you, daughter," father began, his solemnity striking me with dismay.

"With pleasure," I answered; "that is," as an idea struck me, "unless it is to go somewhere away from home and stay all night."

"No, it is to invite a guest here for a whole week."

"Not Aunt Lot and the Reverend Jabez!" I cried, jumping up so that "Christian" fell sprawling on the floor to the bending of a morocco corner.

"Dora Penfield," he said, much to my relief, then paused to give me time to recollect when I had last heard of her.

Dora — Penfield! Ah, yes, I recollect. She was the orphan daughter of an old school friend of mother's, who used to live with a distant relative, in a stately colonial house on the farther edge of town. One of those fine old places, with good china and mahogany within doors, and box-edged walks and a well-preserved garden without, that had much impressed my girlish fancy. In those days, though several years under thirty, she had been quite a personage, a lady bountiful, and every one had been surprised when, without apparent reason, she had suddenly closed the house, all but a few rooms

for a caretaker, and had gone abroad to "study art."

The community was amazed, for to it "art" was an extremely indefinite term (which, by the way, it really is in such cases), variously meaning china painting, embroidering fat strawberries or flowers on tea cloths in such high relief that the cups and saucers go rocking about among them as if at sea. Or, more novel yet and quite the latest thing, copying chromos of gamebirds in oils on well-varnished bread boards, the same to be hung by an elaborately careless knot of hemp rope over the dining-room mantle, surmounted by either the family gun, a tennis racket, boxing gloves, or a fishing basket, according to material available.

The Emporium was sure that Dora Penfield (she was never called "Miss" — that was common) must have lost her money, and hoped if there ever was an auction up at the mansion, she might be alive to go to it.

The Village Liar took an entirely different point of view, affirming that a certain young doctor was at the bottom of the change. He, after serving two years at the hospital for a special course of study, had gone to a distant city as junior assistant to a well-known physician. The why and wherefore of



the matter, however, she did not attempt to unravel.

As this flitted through my brain, I said, seeing light:—

“I suppose she is returning from abroad, and you think it would be more cheerful for her to come here while her home is made ready than to go to a hotel. Of course I will make her welcome, though, if I remember rightly, I was always a bit afraid of her, she sat up so straight, and had a long slim waist, fine clothes, and such white, pointed fingers.”

“Her fingers will no longer be either white or pointed soon,” said father, with a sigh. “She has come home not to open her house, but to take up the vocation of a trained nurse. Why she does it, I do not know. It is not from lack of money, and as she is mentally and physically sound, I have no choice but to take her; and I am glad to have our new venture of a training school start with such good material. When I saw her last week at the hospital, she was quiet and serious, and her choice is evidently not a mere whim.

“You know that we were to have opened the school the middle of this month, but circumstances have delayed the date a week. As she has made

all her arrangements through my mistake, I wish to ask her here, where she will be as free as possible from the village questioning that her resolve is sure to call forth."

I am much relieved that there is nothing complicated about the visit. I see nothing strange in her choice. Nursing always attracted me, and she probably wants to understand how to care for sick people properly, and perhaps have convalescents sometimes share in her big house.

Father had but gone indoors when the Lady of the Bluffs drove up, seemingly quite surprised to see me clothed and in what she considers my right mind, lying back in a piazza chair.

"Well, this is most unusual!" she gasped after taking the stiffest seat. She always was breathless on moving; for her dress waist, which looked fluffy and easy enough, was, I am sure, extremely tight underneath, where some sort of rigid bar gave the straight downward slope affected by Queen Bess, to a form that naturally would express itself in the one or more hillocks common to well-fed middle age.

"To find you at 5 P.M. actually sitting still and playing the lady! Is your garden dead or are you tired of it? Mine is, or rather my fernery. Would

you believe it, my dear, there were green bugs on some of the ferns, and I told our new gardener (he is a German, but only understands some outlandish dialect, and does not take in a word of the easy conversational German I speak) that I knew they ought to be fumigated with something, and he'd better ask for it at the store. I spoke slowly in English; he knows that better than his own tongue evidently, though he won't try to speak it; and I'm sure he understodd, for he wrote down what I said.

"What does he do but go to the store and buy sulphur candles, dozens of them, and not only kill all the plants in the fern house, but my two darling macaws as well, that I always have perched among the plants in the conservatory when I give a blow-out. So decorative, you know! Though I couldn't keep them there all the time, for they screech so that Jenks-Smith says they curdle his blood, which is dangerous for a short-necked man who won't give up port though it's horribly out of fashion. Well, they are dead, the poor dears. Now, what would you do?"

"You might have them stuffed," I suggested.

"Oh, bother the birds! About such incompetent help, I mean."

"If I were you, I would hire a trained English or



Scotch gardener of experience, and then let him engage his own assistants and give him full control," I said, feeling sure that this was one of the many cases where the master and mistress must learn of the man.

"What? and have no say-so about my own things? I guess not. We began that way with a 'trained English gardener,' and if you please, when I ordered him to trim the rooms with cherry blossoms from the young trees for my Japanese tea (I sat under an umbrella and wore a ravishing costume imported especially), he had the impudence to tell me that if he picked the flowers, we must do without cherries later. And when I told him that it was the business of a trained man to see that we had cherries anyhow, he left! When I asked why, the coachman, who is Irish and sociable, told me that the 'blamed thing' said he 'had no use for such as us.' Just fancy!"

I suppressed a fit of giggles with great difficulty, but Effie helped me out by arranging the tea table. Ice and lemon this time, as befitted a very muggy, hot afternoon.

As my lady sat and sipped, — she has 'recently lost a molar and so used her lips like a beak, — she forgot her woes, and suddenly reverted to me, saying,

"Now you must really tell me what you are thinking about. What are you planning? You are staring downhill there as if you had not heard a word that I said. Ah, I know, you are thinking to make that slope into a lawn, and a nice one it will be if you can get the grass to take. We've had horrid luck and are all ploughed up on three sides again for the fourth time."

"A lawn? Why, it is a lawn now!" I exclaimed indignantly,— "a lovely, wild lawn."

"A wild lawn? How odd! just fancy! Why, it is full of everything *but* grass. Somehow, I thought a lawn was *all* grass, you know." This with a critical squint that she always gives when she thinks she has made a point.

"I believe, now you mention it, that lawns are usually made of plain ordinary grass all one even colour, shaven, shorn, and oh, so monotonously green; an unnatural sort of thing, in short, just like the foliage beds people freckle these lawns with.

"Now our lawn that you see down there is decidedly unusual, I will grant, but it's perfectly natural and not at all monotonous, for it's never the same colour for two successive months. Nature, when undisturbed, is never monotonous, you know. Even when using green, the most frequent colour on her palette,

she throws in contrasting tints by way of expression, and you will seldom see two sides of a leaf of the same hue, and the leaf stem frequently gives a bold dash of bronze or purple. Look at the wild grasses of meadows and marsh lands. Do not all the flower colours wash over them in the course of the year, and our bare hillsides wear nearly the heathery hues of the old world?

“In our climate the usual lawn implies a procession of men picking out weeds, followed by another lot sprinkling a mixture of grass seed and earth; then comes a din of mowing machines, and in the fall an avalanche of top dressing, making one think of modernizing the old proverb, ‘A grain of wheat is worth a grain of gold’ to read ‘A blade of grass costs a grain of gold.’

“My lawn is full of resources, and therefore makes few demands. An occasional sprinkling of fertilizer is gratefully received and calls forth a rich green blush of pleasure, but is not exacted; a very moderate trimming by a single mower keeps its tresses in decent array. Then, too, it has its seasons like the garden and many surprises to boot, for in parts it has both moist and dry soil.

“In April, pussy-toes, the little white vernal everlasting, patter across it, and early blue violets hide



between the tufty grass at the bottom toward the stone fence. Saxafrage flowers spring from the leafy rosettes in dry spots where the rock comes nearly to the surface, and in late May moss pink shows its rosy glow here and there.

“Then there are always guinea gold dandelions, strewn at random, that later turn to down and fly away like veritable flowers of magic. Next, following the white violets, come blue speedwell, bluets and coy windflowers in the moist hollow. A few vagrant ox-eye daisies will hang about the fence edge and nestle in among the shrubs, and Jack-over-the-ground creeps hither and thither with golden cups and shining leaves.

“In July yarrow spreads its fragrant fern-cut leaves, and covers places where the grass is thin, and bedstraw with its queer, rough stems and white cross flowers, while up under the hemlock trees on the right, Indian pipe raises its ghostly stems, and pyrola flourishes under the beech tree by the bank wall.

“Look across the green now, for the lawn is delicately green, even if not wholly grass. Do you see that purple tint where the slope begins? It is wild thyme, and next month these purple flowers will be replaced by purple-bronze leaves, and yonder,

climbing around the hill, is a trail of wild marjoram. Do you not smell the clean fragrance that the afternoon dampness holds close? My lawn is a bouquet an acre wide!"

"I smell turkey dressing," said my lady, suddenly.

I had quite forgotten to whom I was speaking, but the shock sobered me at once.

"That is, soup flavouring, I mean; but it's a right stiff guess enough, I reckon, for they do use thyme and such things in cooking. I remember ordering some once when I used to go to market.

"Well, my dear, you always were odd, and you can have your lawn a 'kitchen bouquet' if you choose, but I'm sure our landscapist would say it isn't at all the thing for us.

"By the way, where do you buy your tea? It is *delicious*! Our butler never gets mine twice alike, and he blames it on the second man whose duty it is to see that the water boils. *He* only pours it on, of course, and serves it.

"Make it myself, as you always do in the indoor season? I tried it once and burned a hundred-dollar mechlin sleeve drapery in the horrid urn lamp.

"Would you just give me a bunch of your delicious lemon verbena? It will be such a relief to have a change in the flavouring in the finger glasses. The

only good-smelling thing we have this year is rose geranium, and we're done to death with it. Last night I really believe the chef flavoured the ices with it, and last week he candied some with rose leaves, and they looked real well in my new pierced silver basket."

\* \* \* \* \*

I do not think that I shall sit upon the piazza in the afternoon again for some time. I shall have the seat mended up in the old cherry tree where I used to perch and play princess in a tower and feel romantic ten years ago, and then I can vanish among the branches where nothing worse than tree-toads and blue-jays can see me.

I find myself wondering about Dora Penfield. Is it a case of vocation, or is there a romance in hiding? I wonder how Evan will bear up under a whole week's visitation. If she comes Saturday, I shall know all about it; and if she doesn't, I shall forget that I wanted to know, which will do quite as well. I wonder if she will be interested in the garden. I hope so, for I must do some hard work again next week.

That reminds me that I have promised father that I will speak to Martha about learning to make



Franco-American bread. Poor lamb, he is really pathetic. He says he has eaten toast until he expects to turn to crumbs, and that pikelets, muffins, and Sally Lunn cakes are no longer a consolation or substitutes. Heigh-ho! it is too late to-night.

Ah, how the fragrance floats up through the window from my "bank whereon the wild thyme grows." I wonder what Shakespeare would have thought of Mrs. Jenks-Smith! She would hardly have considered him "the thing"; but possibly might have suggested that he give a reading in her garden at half rates to introduce himself.

## XVI

### SEPTEMBER

#### THE COLOURS OF FLOWERS

*September 5.* The garden change between late August and early September is in degree of ripeness only. Two weeks ago the annuals pleaded their cause most eloquently by their cheerful profusion. Now a storm of a night and day that threatened to bring cool weather, but merely passed over leaving a wake of yellow haze, has well-nigh stripped these summer flowers of their fleeting finery. Everywhere the seed pods raised above the fallen petals make their bids for perpetuity, while the early-blooming, hardy plants that escaped trimming, like foxgloves and sweet William, are already surrounded by a colony of downy, tender green seedlings.

“Pods are the poppies, and slender spires of pods  
The hollyhocks.”

The alcove of camelia balsams is quite dishevelled, and the pointed, cocoon-like pods, from which

one always expects to see a moth or butterfly emerge, are ripening at the bottom of the stalk, and sending forth a fusilade of brown shot. These balsams, though rather unpickable flowers, have been a two months' glory, from their solid quality and the beautiful colours of the spurred blossoms. No annual more perfectly displays the so-called pastel tints, — peachblow, lilac, mauve, ivory white, pale salmon, in addition to vivid crimsons, scarlet, and many vivid and spotted hybrids.

Alas for my bed of novelties from the "Yellow Journal" catalogue! Not only did it become merely a mass of miscellaneous wreckage even before August ended, but so sodden and water-soaked that I had to have the débris removed with a garden fork, and Bertle has now thoroughly worked over the ground for the first planting of Shirley poppies. Those sown in early September make sturdy tufts before frost, and in spring, bloom three weeks earlier than those from the October-sown seed that does not germinate until April.

Father and Evan have taken their vacations during the past three months by daily installments, thus making the most of opportunity and fine weather. Evan has made many little garden improvements; for to him as well as father, vacation



idleness is merely a change from mental to physical employment.

The wild walk beyond the sun garden offered the greatest possibilities, and it is chiefly there that he has spent his strength, sometimes varying this work by training our new horse in side-saddle docility. This penchant of Evan for horse training was the primary cause of depriving the Church of his services. In his youth, when on a probationary visit to his uncle, the Dean, he had escaped daily to a nearby race course, and there ingratiated himself so thoroughly with the stable men that he was allowed to exercise an especially cantankerous mare. He was thus surprised by His Reverence when handling a mount in an exceedingly scientific and jockeyfied manner, and sent home in disgrace.

The wild walk born of the cowpath is either arched by trees or screened by bushes for the greater part of its length. In one place, however, for a space of some twenty yards it crosses the open field, giving a view of cultivated farmland below that mars the effect of wildness and seclusion.

To overcome this defect, Evan, with Bertle's aid in post setting, has made the framework of a sort of arbour that screens the walk completely. It is not of set and formal lattice work like the old rose

arbour, for its posts, though nearly of the same height, are no two of the same size or distance apart, being slim trees — birch, cedar, maple, tulip, pine, and chestnut, with the bark left on. These he has bound together with the woody vines of wild grapes from the grove above the house, where they reach up sometimes thirty or forty feet into the trees, without branching, and then loop and twist themselves into huge grotesque knots. An ox yoke, found in an old barn, and venerable with lichens, makes the entering lintel of the roof, also woven of grape vine and curved branches.

Already the effect is of a path cut trail-fashion through thickset trees, and when to complete the plan it shall be covered with native vines meshed carefully in and out, — bittersweet, clematis, coral honeysuckle, Virginia creeper, frost grapes, bindweed, climbing hemp, wild yam, and even catbriar, — it will be quite unique, a bit of wild “pleached alley” conceived and born in the garden of a commuter’s wife.

\* \* \* \* \*

The September garden has flowers all its own that have more of the personality that mark those of May and early June.

The sweet peas have done their work; that is, those of the trellised vines of the long walk. In July, after a heavy rain, I planted a row of the dwarf pink and white *Blanche Ferry* as an experiment, just as we use dwarf peas in the vegetable garden for autumn bearing, and they are now full of buds breaking into bloom, though the flowers are not so large as those of the earlier season.

I have never been successful in sowing the tall sweet peas in succession for autumn blooming, for they are of deliberate growth, and hot weather wastes their vitality in feverish effort. This, to be sure, has been an exceptionally equable season, and rather the exception than the rule. I like to think it is a sort of golden jubilee to welcome me home to my own again. Even *Blanche Ferry* might have dried up or died from mildew if August had been either wholly dry or rent with battering thunder storms, as I have known to be the case. Let every one who makes garden plans frequently insert the letters C. P. in them as a reminder, the same standing for climate permitting.

The *Margaret* carnations are now blooming as freely as border pinks, and with the summer roses give the table a fragrant bouquet once more. *Heliotrope* is still in profusion, also the *mignonette* that



had a half-shady exposure. The wall flowers are growing more bushy and profuse, while the last planting of gladioli, by chance wholly lacking in pink tints, is striving to rival nasturtiums and salvia in colour.

The white panicked-flowered clematis, though in its first year, is covering the end of the honeysuckle wall, where it is entrenched, with snow. Yet the distinctive character of the September garden is to be found in two species that divide the honours of the month equally between them, — the asters and the Dahlias, once represented only by the neat but rigid quilled species that have now been hybridized into a dozen graceful forms and exquisite tints. Though the cactus type of Dahlia is the most interesting and individual, the long-stemmed single varieties are very graceful, and when gathered are more amenable to arrangement, while the large quilled rosettes of splendid winery crimson and purple colours seem in their turn unmatchable; their velvet texture is the garden's autumn robe donned at the first thought of colder weather.

I have tried the experiment of fastening my Dahlias against a low trellis such as supports the nasturtiums and sweet peas, and it is very satisfactory. Such succulent plants are likely to be broken down and bereft of many branches if merely secured to a stake.

But in this way the shoots may be pulled through the wires, and a sightly hedge is the result, while the support is high and strong enough to let me cover the plants nightly with light-weight unbleached cotton, if frost threatens too early.

If asters like a garden, they thrive mightily; if not, they are the most ungrateful of annuals. They must have deep, cool soil which ants have never inhabited or from which they have been banished, else at the very moment when they should bloom, they wither away almost in a single night. When the plant is pulled up to find the cause, a swarm of white lice will be found feeding upon the root, these being the cows that supply milk to the ant nursery, and always plentiful in ant colonies.

Asters may be had in all shades of colour except, I think, the three distinct primaries, — true vermilion, blue, and yellow, in this following the balsams, save that these last possess a real scarlet.

\* \* \* \* \*

To these September flowers must be added the waxy white day lily (*funkia subcordata*), a light, scattering, second blooming of many hardy June plants such as larkspurs; the late phloxes and a slender sheaf of hybrid perpetual roses, though in

our soil at this time they yield only flat, semi-double flowers of poor quality. The hybrid teas are our only satisfactory hardy autumn-blooming roses.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dora Penfield has come and gone, staying not one week, but two. In fact, her visit was the cause of my neglect of you, my Garden Boke, during the last half of August. Now I will make up for it by telling you about her, for you are discreet, having ears and no lips. I've felt so pent up and conscious ever since she made me her unwilling confidante; for though I gave and was asked for no promises of secrecy, I feel a reserve altogether new to me, and that I ought not to tell Evan even, which is very uncomfortable, for he is too wholesomely direct to sympathize. Later I may hint of it to father, however; for he must often come in contact with her at the hospital, and may need to understand her peculiar attitude and moods. Why she told me so much about her life I cannot imagine, unless she felt that she must have the relief of speech, and seeing the perfect understanding between Evan and me, thought that I of necessity must sympathize with her. So I do. But no, pity is the word; for the darkness of her life, father says, as in the case of so many he meets,



comes from the fact that she has stood, as it were, in her own shadow, and tried to manage nature.

I think that poor Dora must have been born to or inherited a certain vein of ill luck that she has either had too much self-complacency to recognize or else lacked the force to forestall. According to her own fragmentary account, which I have pieced together by intuition, from her girlhood, when her parents died leaving her rich as money is reckoned in the country, mischance continually fell upon her in ways for which she denied all responsibility. She is, in fact, the sort of woman who is always overtaken by a shower when she goes out in her best clothes.

She went to college, and seems to have obtained a feeling of superiority over her less ambitious sisters, instead of breadth of vision and culture. Next, she travelled abroad awhile with some college friends, and, on her return, opened her old home, which she improved, having one gift, the rare skill that knows how to renew without making the newness apparent.

For several years she led a self-satisfactory life, being a leader of a small social procession, ready in charity and much flattered and consulted. Then fate stepped in and began to meddle with the even fabric of her life, and as she thinks, tangle the skein

and mismatch its colour. For to a vague thing to which, when kind, she referred as Providence, and when harsh, Fate, she attributes all events, with the superstition of Delia or Mrs. Mullins, and never arraigns herself for errors or deems her judgments impeachable.

Fate came a-wooing in the form of the serious and really fine-looking young doctor of the hospital, upon whom at the time the Village Liar fixed her suspicions. For a year Dora and he were much together. It was really the first time that she, in her narrow, suburban life, had come under the influence of a man evidently much more than her equal, and near her own age, she being, perhaps, two years his senior.

She justified the acquaintance to herself and juggled with its reality by calling it friendship. He did not, and the moment that he had secured a footing on the professional ladder, a good opening in a distant city, he told her in all sincerity that he now might ask her for the promise that it would have been selfish and one-sided to have expected before; he being frank and simple-minded, never for a moment doubted that she was as single-hearted as he himself.

She really did love him, that is, as far as she

knew how, the shadow of self always keeping well between; but she resented his taking her love for granted, though she had been telling it by eye and accent for many months. She was not yet proud of him, though she meant to marry him, but the shadow lay heavily; for whether she realized it or not, she did not care to leave her pedestal to become either the betrothed or the wife of a man as yet unknown. She fenced to gain time, using the well-worn subterfuge, half argument, half coquetry, saying "to bind him before his way was made might retard his progress—she was too old for him, he would meet younger, prettier faces, and outgrow her—their friendship was intellectual, while a doctor needed heart more than head in a wife."

Then seeing that he stood white and aghast, suffering but making no protest, she grew angry, and told him hotly that in two years' time—the space that he asked her to wait for him—he would probably thank her for the advice, never dreaming that he would take her seriously. He assented humbly, only asking if he might write to her in the interval. She said, "Yes, if you will never mention love or marriage until two years are over," not even then expecting that she would be taken at her word.

He went to his new post; a letter or two came,



detailed and full of his professional work. Restless and miserable, but still keeping rigidly to her pedestal, she went abroad, ostensibly to study art, but really to follow the great procession who wander aimlessly about, guide-book in hand, for various reasons trying to kill time out of eye-shot of the critical.

Every other week letters were exchanged, and in order to match his professional enthusiasm in kind, Dora dropped the easy gossip of travel, visited the hospitals wherever she went, grew technical, and dilated upon the splendid career offered women through trained nursing, hinting idly that she felt strongly drawn to make the vocation her own.

When two years had nearly passed, she turned homeward in an apparently leisurely sort of way without special significance. But in reality she was feverishly impatient, and her trunk contained many of the pretty things that make up bridal finery. When she arrived and was well rested, she sent Him (for she thought the word in capitals now) a note to say at what hotel she was stopping, and that she was "only passing through the city on her way home" — nothing more.

He came at once with honest eagerness. A lover would have noticed that it was two years

to a day since they had parted, but he only regarded the time approximately, took both her hands, and looked her squarely in the face as he told her how well she looked, and that as the forbidden time for speaking of himself was over, he must be selfish.

He thanked her for her patient friendship, and for her wise advice, saying that even two years before she had known him better than he himself had done. He told of his success and that what she had said had all proved true. He now realized that a physician from his anxious life did not need a helpmeet of the head as much as of the heart, and that he was just betrothed to the daughter of his senior, a wholesome, fresh young girl, whom she would love and who carried restfulness in her very laugh. No one knew it yet, as he wished Dora to be the first to hear the news, and give her good wishes to them both.

He said that in another year or two he expected to have a hospital for children in connection with his practice, and that as Dora seemed deliberately to have chosen to adopt the vocation of a nurse, what would be more fitting than that she should have charge of it!

Did you ever dream of such a tangle, you dear,

straight-forward, open-paged Garden Boke? Tell me who was to blame, the man or the woman? I fear me it was the silly, selfish woman. The man was simply attracted by an older woman, as many are, lacked imagination, did as he was told, found his mistake, and shifted Dora to a maternal, cousinly place in his regard as she had bid, and thought all well. If it turned out to his own advantage, who can blame him? Dora would not have been a good doctor's wife. She is too rigid. I am sure that she would have objected to extra or irregular meals, insisted upon regulating the social status patients, and had a large and prominent door mat, saying, "Wipe your feet" spread down during office hours.

Now having committed herself, her pride is forcing her to go into training for a profession she only half likes; and I truly believe that the ill luck that still clings, combined with the old New England disease of unnecessary self-abnegation, which father says is a curse left by the witches the Puritans burned, will lead her eventually to go to the children's hospital, and thus literally keep a wound from healing by rubbing salt in it.

Ah, me! suppose I had hesitated about going to England with Evan and put him off. Would



he have waited and come back? Of course he would, but then I'm glad I didn't. What nonsense I'm thinking. Evan says that the difficulty with women is that they take everything personally, and thereby are often unnecessarily tormented, which is perfectly true.

\* \* \* \* \*

*September 20.* Twice lately father and Evan have been over the hills to Chain Lakes, fishing for black bass, and had great sport, father getting the most exercise, and Evan the most fish. Father is classic and conservative, and used artificial flies, while Evan took a choice collection of small toads, newts, locusts, and big grasshoppers, which evidently were more attractive. Yesterday I went with them, riding the newly trained horse, who proved comfortably meek, while the men each took one of the grays.

Ah, the colour of the September hills! Earlier in the season we look for form, detail, fragrance. Now colour seems to fill the eye, and we store it away against the time of neutral tints. The trees were as solidly green as in July, only here and there a Virginia creeper winding through them like a gay ribbon, while the fragrance of wild

grapes sunning upon the stone fences was wafted everywhere. The colour followed the ground; Joe Pye and goldenrod surging in great waves across the open, settling in shoulder-deep pools in the hollows and breaking into a golden spray of giant sunflowers over the fences and against the wood edges.

The dwarf sumachs were beginning to glow like live coals on the drier hills, and here and there the cardinal flower followed a brook out to the road, but the prevailing colour was the peculiar purplish pink and gold—the tint that heather, gorse, and broom give to the English moors and Scottish hills. So many people go out and admire the more gaudy autumn leaf reds and yellows, and never seem to notice this intermediate stage between summer and autumn. The fishing proved too intricate for even short petticoats, so I amused myself by following a number of tempting wood trails on horseback, and saw in the course of the morning, much to father's delight, samples of our trio of game birds, woodcock, quail, and ruffed-grouse—all quite tame and seemingly conscious of the protection of the close season. They had better be on guard, however; in ten days or so fishing rods will be put to bed and guns will appear. Meanwhile, the local sporting

element goes out at night semi-weekly to train the young hounds to trail and locate fox holes for the real hunting later on.

Evan went last week, taking Bugle and Tally-ho. He didn't come home until after two in the morning, tired but happy, four promising dens having been located. The hounds were brought back this morning by a farmer to whose house they had gone. The old dogs lead, and the young follow with some of the huntsmen afoot, while the others, especially invited guests, choose a point of vantage and listen to the music of the full cry as the course winds in and out, almost every owner recognizing the voice of his own dog. When the practice is over, a midnight supper is eaten at the rallying point, and the pack divided, each going home with his owner. Of course many of the young dogs get off on crossed trails and rabbit tracks and keep on running.

These, according to local etiquette, are always returned by the first to find them, the tariff being a dollar per dog, irrespective of distance travelled. Of course the whole thing would seem very primitive to the costumed chasers of tame foxes and aniseed bags, but it is the custom here, and as it meets the people's needs, what would you have?



I used to go on these trials, and I'm going again next week. The mad baying of the hounds over the hills and the break to full cry is as stimulating as martial music. As to seeing the fox killed, that is another thing, — a necessary act, but not for the sight of Barbara.

\* \* \* \* \*

*September 27.* I have left a number of plants to go to seed in the garden in spite of the ragged air they lend, for the sake of the birds they attract. The composite flowers are the favourites, — coreopsis, zinnias, asters, rudbeckias. This morning a line of tall Russian sunflowers that head the vegetable garden seemed fairly alive with the darling black-capped goldfinches, who swung to and fro, performing all sorts of trapeze feats, as they picked out the seeds, like pins from a cushion, all the while giving their canary-like call.

Flower form is becoming indistinct; the later blooms are less articulate. The anemone Japonica is the single exception that upholds springlike purity of shape and whiteness among the ragged, twisted, or primly tufted October chrysanthemums.

The colour influence of flowers upon the mind has never before appealed to me as it has this

season. For many months I have gathered and arranged flowers of all kinds in all ways, giving especial thought and love to the decoration of the table, striving to group the flowers according to their meaning as well as to the day and meal.

Of this one thing I am sure, that the rarest colours are those that are least effective by themselves. Take blue, for example. We have fewer true blue garden flowers than any others — lobelias, centaurea, larkspur, a lily or two, forget-me-nots, lupins, scillas, hyacinths, and a few more, but to be effective they need white as a foil. My blue alcove would have been dull indeed but for an edging of white candytuft, while the loops and spires of larkspur seemed out of place amid its green foliage until an underlying mass of white feverfew came in bloom and made a setting. The beauty of a sapphire is unrevealed until it is mated with a diamond.

If the cultivated garden at any time does not yield flowers of the right expressiveness for the flower language of the table, the wild garden will always supplement it. All summer I have striven to have the breakfast flowers more delicate and of paler colours than those for the later, heavier meals. In May white narcissi with their own foliage in a slender green vase at breakfast, rich tulips in a

solid hued bowl at dinner. In June, pink and white rose sprays well mingled with ferns at breakfast, the bowl of gorgeous crimson and rich pink roses garlanded with honeysuckle for dinner. The trouble is very slight, for each arrangement will serve two days.

In July and August water-lilies floating close together in a flat glass dish of conventional lotus shape were my morning motive; of course they closed at noon. These only required renewing semi-weekly, if I was careful to gather the freshly opened flowers with stamens thrown widely back to tell of their youth.

In June, too, the common field daisies almost rivalled the rose in usefulness, combining with white and shell-pink poppies in the morning, while what could be more fitting at midday than an old-time blue jar filled with a bouquet of daisies and scarlet poppies edged with ribbon grass?

The colour change can thus be rung endlessly, every day and every mood suggesting variations; and so many lovely blossoms close at noon that they must make their bow at breakfast table or not at all, while others are only wide awake at night.

I wondered if my men noticed this flower whim of mine, for they said nothing. But then, men



are more prone to speak of what they dislike, and quietly absorb the likable. One intense August morning that promised a day of the dizzy heat of which the locust sings, I discovered that the flowers picked the day before were drooping and pitiful; so hurrying down the wild walk, I gathered a great handful of ferns, the hay-scented, lady ferns and maidenhair, to which the heavy moisture of the night still clung, and grouping them hastily in one of my frosted vases, set them on the table at the moment that Evan came in.

“How did you know that my head aches to-day?” he asked, as his eyes rested on the bit of wood coolness. “Nasturtiums would have positively irritated me this morning; but then, your breakfast flowers are always restful, Barbara.”

So he has recognized it all along! Dear, blessed, stupid men, why don't you realize what your slightest word of praise is worth to those who love you? I've waited quite three months for those few words. By the same token, — for it's growing cold this afternoon, — I must make haste to gather a great jar of Dahlias and red geraniums with their leaves, to supplement the hearth fire we shall have at dinner time, keeping one ruby velvet flower for my hair.

Effie has brought in the tea, and said, “Mrs.

Corkle bids me say that she would like to speak private with you and Mr. Evan, and she may."

What can it be? Are the bread lessons too difficult for her to master? Is it the "'ome-brewed" again, or can she be wishing to go back to England when the year is up? I thought that she had seemed happier since Effie's coming. Six months ago I should have welcomed this, but not now. There is a great deal of home comfort concealed about Martha Corkle, if only she and her environment were not somewhat at odds.

## XVII

### SEPTEMBER

#### THE APOTHEOSIS OF MARTHA CORKLE

*September 28.* Can it possibly be only twenty-four hours since I closed my Garden Boke in haste, and left it on the window seat? Since the afternoons have become cooler, close before dusk I find myself lounging or writing in my watch tower, as Evan calls the latticed window. Through its diamond panes the garden landscape separates itself into miniatures personal and intimate, which by the opening of the casement merge again to one broad picture.

Father came home last evening a little after dark, which is now before six. He had been to a consultation a half-day's drive away, but instead of seeming worried or tired he was laughing heartily as he opened the door, which hilarity, upon seeing me, he subdued to an exceedingly quizzical expression about the nose, such as his face wears at times of special content. The last demonstration of this



kind happened several weeks ago, when at the end of a discussion with one of his book-mad friends upon the subject of the misnamed and impossible portraits, which had proved snares in the path of their extra illustrating, the Dominie came hurrying back in great excitement to show that he had picked up a portrait of Nicholas Culpepper, hitherto ungettable, the which father soon proved conclusively to be that of René Descartes misnamed!

Upon my telling father of Martha's request for an interview in private, he only laughed the harder, while Evan took the matter quite indifferently, though I could see that he writhed a little at the idea of a first experience in coming face to face with an uncertain domestic discussion.

He seemed to linger an unusual time over his coffee, and I was obliged fairly to drag him into the den to finish his cigar, while father retreated to the study, his eyes shining with mischief, and closed the door in a very ostentatious manner.

Evan went to his desk, but drummed with his fingers instead of writing; I tried two chairs, and finally curled up in the ingle nook, divided between anxiety and curiosity.

Presently we heard Martha's firm tread come down the hall. Stumbling over Bluff and Lark,

who as usual were lying back to back halfway between the doors of den and study, she made a somewhat sudden entrance without knocking; the jar, of course, accounting for her flushed face.

We were both aware of a difference in her dress, but did not dare exchange glances. The usual starched and spotless apron was lacking; she wore her Sunday cashmere with cuffs and turnover collar of white crocheted lace, fastened by a large brooch containing a Jubilee portrait of the Queen; while upon her sleekly brushed black hair that was almost guiltless of gray, rested a lace cap of staunch British build ornamented with a spray of red roses that formed a quivering bowsprit in the front.

She did not curtsy as usual; she did not smile. Instinctively I drew a chair close to Evan's, while he asked Martha to be seated.

"An' thank you kindly, Mr. Evan," she replied, moistening her lips, that seemed glued together, "but I feel easier afoot and firmer-like for what I 'as to say."

"Why, whatever is the matter?" said Evan, kindly, rising and going toward her; for great beads of sweat stood on her forehead and she clasped and unclasped her hands continually. "Ill news from home, or are you unhappy over here?"

"Worse than that, Mr. Evan, and I'm shamefaced to tell it. I'm going to marry Timothy Saunders!"

"Good Lord!" cried Evan, checking a long-drawn whistle with great effort.

"Mr. Evan, sir, it's not that bad as you need should speak so, I'm sure! I'm not fifty-two till come last Guy Fawkes eve, and many an older marries. My mother's sister Janet she took her second when turning sixty and her third full five years later."

"It's not you, Martha," said Evan, pulling himself together, and getting his laughing muscles well under control. "I've often wondered, with your face and figure, that you haven't married. In fact, once when I was six years old and you gave me a whole queen cake for not telling when I got a black eye in a fight with the butcher's boy, who was your cousin's son, I seriously thought of marrying you myself."

"But you was always so considerate-like, Mr. Evan," Martha interrupted, dropping her stiffness and a curtsy at the same time.

"It's Crumpled Tim I'm thinking of," continued Evan. "He's good as gold, but not the sort of man I should think would take your fancy, Martha. He's lopsided and growing rheumatic; besides, he has a poor opinion of women. He has often said when



I've asked the cause, 'Maister Evan, I'm done on weemin. They're a' that feekle and flutterin' that a mon can neersomever ken where they'll licht next. I'm weel cleart o' them.' "

"Good as gold is a true sayin', Mr. Evan, and that without references to the eight hundred pounds he's got in bank from twenty years' service. His rheumatics is much improved since I made up those proper flannels; 'tis the hawful shrinkin' of the others (no one to wash them thinkin' like) that's had much to do with crumplin' his figger; not that I hold it bad, legs and arms all bein' there, but a mite disarranged, as it were. As for women bein' changeful, they generally his so, and worse; and how could he halter his mind until he'd seen different? Has you can certify, Mr. Evan, and Mrs., too, I never flutters, and where I puts down my foot, there I stands."

"Does Tim know that you are going to marry him?" asked Evan, to my horror, for I expected that Martha would retire in high dudgeon, and we should altogether miss the dramatic particulars. But she was too desperately in earnest to heed his meaning.

"Yes, Mr. Evan, I told him this day come twelve of the clock when, lackin' 'ome-brewed, I give him a cup o' broth to hearten him for goin' across country with the doctor to a conversation or a crowner's quest

or sumat. He standin' outside my window where the geraniums be, me inside, and to token it we both is now wearin' a flower, chance he hasn't lost his in the jolting." And Martha pointed to a red geranium surrounded by a tuft of parsley that garnished her belt.

"Sit down and tell us all about it," chuckled Evan, fairly pulling her into a chair with a genial determination that was infectious. "It's all in the family, you know."

"Yes, that it is, and who else should I tell? And what's the good of having news an' ye must coop it? It's like cold veal pie upon the chest for supper, the same being over old, under done, and dry o' gravy.

"Yes, Mr. Evan, and Mrs. too, not to be partial, Tim'thy Saunders didn't have an idea o' marryin', and though ailin', didn't know of what, so he had to be told, that he had; and me knowin', I had to take the leadin', bein' my plain duty to a fellow creature, so to speak.

"Two months gone Tim'thy fell backward in his eatin', for they fry meat to rags up at the farm he bides at. He'd come outside my window when I was dishin' stew, dressin' kidneys, or turnin' out a loaf, and sniff and breathe heavy like, and say, 'Mrs.

Corkle, they don't handle victuals 'ere like they did at 'ome. E'en the mouthful o' bread rises to the nose and leaves the belly empty.'

"There are *some*, 'owsomever, that doesn't like durable bread, so to speak, tastes differin'."

I could feel the scorn wave settling on my guilty head, but Martha never paused.

"It's terribly piteous to 'ear a man sigh on account of poor victuals, and it shook my vitals. So now and again I offered him a tit-bit, knowin' you'd not object, and he always eat them hearty.

"Next I noticed he'd sit in the stable at night, his 'ead on his arms; and the same bein' lonesome and unhealthful, I bid him be free of the settin' room, and have a game with Eliza and Delia, me mindin' my needle that he needn't think I was wishful o' the sight of him.

"Then one day when he flung down his coat to take in some firin', I minded it lacked every button, and his braces was tied up with strings, the same which when I took notice of he turned very distant and sour and drew a long sigh which would start one a-shiverin'.

"So it dragged along, and never a good word he said in return for the flannels which I gave on your hand, Mrs. Evan, but just hintin' the sewin' was



mine, only growling out that one woman is tortmentsome enough, but two's like the fire that never quenches.

"He hadn't passed a word with me since Sunday, when to-day, me workin' by the window, he stops and stands glowerin' in. I passes him the cup o' broth, which he didn't touch at first till I called out, for it burned my fingers; and when he did, his hand shook till some spilled over.

"'Whatever ails ye, man?' I calls, me grabbin' to catch it, bein' inside pantry china that I'd snatched up heedless.

"'I dinna ken, Martha Corkle, unless it's death a-beckonin' me,' he said most doleful. Then I seed my duty plain, which I never shirks, and I up and says, 'Timothy Saunders, I know what ails you; it ain't death, it's marriage! You needs a home to sit in after hours, and good cooked victuals, and buttons instead o' strings, and roomy flannels; you needs a sip o' hot Scotch well sweetened of a winter night, and a fire o' yer own to take it by, shut from remark. Tim'thy Saunders, you needs 'Ome Brewed! You needs a wife!'

"'It may be as you say, Martha Corkle,' he says, meek-like, 'but there's not one as would take Crumpled Tim, lest to make sport of him.'

“‘God guide you,’ said I, ‘but is your pate thick as a Christmas pudding? Don’t you know I’m ailin’, too, for need o’ a man to do all those same things for? I’m goin’ to marry you, Timothy Saunders!’ and says he, ‘If ye will, ye will, and it’s no for me to contradict ye, Martha Corkle; and I’ll go further to say I’m weel content.’

“Now wasn’t that just grand o’ him, Mr. Evan, and Mrs., too, with no disrespect intended? I trowed he’d need more convincin’ and circum-ventin’.

“With that he fetched a grand, loud laugh, and give his word, and, Mrs. Evan, I’m sad to tell that china cup is broke! clean parted, and I’ve made bold to say we each has kept a half!”

Martha paused for breath, while Evan shook her hand and poured out somewhat incoherent words mingled with compliments on her generalship.

A moment served her for recuperation, and she began anew in answer to Evan’s statement that, as she had married before, she probably knew her own mind, which was an advantage.

“Before has no concern in the matter, Mr. Evan, for a body, man or woman, hits the real marriage but onct; gin it be first or last, there’s only reely one. My own mother hadn’t her own mind till her third,

and her step-aunt's brother was never rightly suited till his fourth, and he over seventy.

"I am lucky, as ye say, Mr. Evan, to get my choice, early in life, as it were, which might pass for the first, as Corkle, though fairish while he lasted, wasn't o' my choosin', it bein' brought about by the cattle-show and cousins, with me too tender-hearted to say no."

"When are you to marry Timothy?" I ventured, with visions of domestic change.

"Two weeks come Wednesday, if it's approved, Mrs. Evan. I worked that all hout in my mind before I spoke to Tim'thy. An' the doctor's agreeable, we could take up house in the floor by the stables for the time, the same bein' quite a cottage, havin' as good a settin' room as needed, if cleaned well and freshened up a bit with a red rose paper. I've told myself many a time these years that if I'd ever a settin' room again, it's red roses I'd choose.

"There's a good bit o' unused meadow on the north side where I could raise fowls and a goose or two; please Heaven, I'll have one fatted o' me own next Michaelmas, and spread the linen to bleach. There's no such pleasure as doin' laundry when you've the time to coax it clean, so to speak."



"Laundry? what laundry?" I asked, amazed.

"Why, yours and the master's and the doctor's, to be sure. I've rattled on that heedless that I've brought it out end first. I thought, and *no* disrespect intended, Mr. and Mrs. Evan both, that Eliza could go back to cookin', her bread bein' approved, if her kidneys is as yet underdone and bacon flabby, while I'd handle the laundry quite away and private, besides lending a hand, as one of the tenantry might, with jam and Christmas puddings!"

"Good Old Reliable!" exclaimed Evan, patting Martha on the back; while I do not blush, dear Garden Boke, to say that, braving an eye poke from the red rose, I kissed her, — the hereditary servant with our comfort inseparable from her own. This act, however, she promptly discounted by saying with a suspicious sniff: —

"Thank ye kindly both. One aint hexactly responsible for acts, when hexcited by talk of weddin's. For Effie she's that pleased she's near forgot her manners, too, on account of me asking her to be bridesmaid, which belonging to his family is suitable, and Timothy'll give her a new gown to wear, her savin's bein' small, and those she brought from 'ome bein' drawn too tight in the front o' the body."

*Exit Martha. Enter father,* so suddenly that he was self-convicted of eaves-dropping, and tumbling into a chair, rocked with laughter.

"Tim told me this afternoon," he gasped. "'Doctor,' he said, 'Martha Corkle's going to marry me. She asked me this morning.' But he put it differently as to preliminaries. It seems that he has admired Martha since the day we set the sundial, but in his youth, having been jilted by a girl the day they were to marry, he left his home after swearing 'by the hearthstone,' which he considers an inviolable oath, never to ask another woman to be his wife.

"He was greatly bothered, and finally resolved that he'd pine and mope, and perchance work upon her pity; and I don't know which pleases him most, the circumvention, as he thinks, or the winning of Martha."

This insight from Crumpled Tim, the woman-hater! So each one takes the credit for the result.

"Which," added father, blowing his nose vigorously, "I believe to be a love match to the core, in spite of the contrariety of the principals.

"And what do you suppose Tim asked of me as 'a token' for his housekeeping but The Orphan!

"'Doctor,' he said, a comical look spreading over

his features, 'a woman's a good thing, and a dog's anither, and I'm weel suited ter baith in the same year. Gin a year agone, I'd an ill word for the wan and a kick for the ither.' "

"Barbara," said Evan after a moment's silence, "did I not say that the question of the 'home-brewed' would probably adjust itself?"

This being during our three married years his nearest approach to "I told you so," is additional proof of Evan's superiority over his sex.



## XVIII

### OCTOBER

#### THE YEAR'S MIND

*October 18.* The first real frost came to the garden last night, though for two weeks past the hoar has silvered the lowlands at every sunrise. The heliotrope hangs its blackened head, and the vigorous nasturtiums are spilling their sap as the season's sacrifice. A few verbenas, Margaret carnations, and rosebuds alone remain of the summer garden. The Dahlias, owing to protection, have gained a few days' reprieve, but their quality is impaired. After a hard frost all flowers droop when taken indoors, except the hardy old-time chrysanthemums, whose red, yellow, white, and tawny buttons seldom fail to outlast the month.

The pit is finished, and comfortably ensconced in it are the various cuttings and the tea roses, together with the first instalment of potted bulbs for winter blooming. This year I am trying Bermuda Easter lilies as house plants, having prepared a dozen pots of large bulbs that after being buried will evolute

gradually through the pit to the den windows. The violets are quite settled in their frames, and to-day Evan is wearing some in his buttonhole.

Frost is never welcome, and yet without it one would lack the courage to destroy and regulate the garden for its winter sleeping season. Frost bids us pause and retrospect, giving us time to note the difference between the good and illy planned before snow obliterates the traces. For this reason October is the "year's mind" of the garden, the anniversary of completion.

Ah, the glitter and sparkle of the mornings and the rides down to the shore and along the crisp shingle! I never care much for the bay in season, when the summer people use it for a bath-tub, or disport themselves nervously in naphtha launches that fret its placid surface. But when the October winds have scattered these and the gulls return to circle and call, then I must go to the water, for my heart answers the gulls' notes with a wild cry and, like them, has its time of venturous free flight. Father goes with me, and often we do not speak a word after the lighthouse boat answers our signal, but sit and watch the water slip off the oars, in the complete companionship of silence.

Walks, too, there are, long walks to the hill country

both for the pleasure of motion and for ferns to add to the wild garden, Evan toiling home with a well-filled pack like a veritable pedler, while I carry a fishing basket slung over the shoulder to harbour more delicate plants. For alack! a bit of our favourite woods is being stripped of its trees and turned to a quarry, so that now any plants we take cannot be reckoned despoiling, but rather a rescue.

Martha and Tim were married yesterday at noon in the den, and Evan gave away the bride. Martha would have preferred a church wedding, but the suggestion had such a paralyzing effect upon Tim that she quickly abandoned it, wisely remarking:—

“It may be just as well, Mrs. Evan. I’d not be for pushing a dissenter too far!”

I decorated the room with flowers from town, and made a little bower of the earliest of my potted chrysanthemums. Martha looked really superb in a black silk gown, Evan’s gift, and a reasonably decorative white bonnet of my making, for her taste in headgear is not to be trusted; while Effie wore a darkish blue that mediated between her fiery hair and freckles.

The dogs all came to the wedding with white bows on their collars. This at Martha’s request,



and the Anglican Catholic did not object; while The Orphan acted as best man, sitting close to Tim, at whom he gazed solemnly, and wagged his tail audibly whenever he responded, which Tim did with full swearing vigour.

After the feast the couple were to have gone down to the city for a few days, sight-seeing, but the cake was hardly cut, and the bride toasted, when Tim seemed to grow uneasy, and mumbling something about Bertle's having no hand with horses, edged toward the door, followed by Martha, who explained in answer to questioning looks:—

“Thank you all kindly, but the thought of the town, 'twas quite enough for us. Tim'thy's new boots bein' over small, and my silk gown that rich and thick 'twere a sin to sit down in it, we'll just slip over home'ards to the 'cottage' instead, and ease us of them and have a cosey cup o' tea, and no disrespect intended.”

Sure enough, at five o'clock Timothy was leading the grays to the watering trough, the same as usual, save only one difference: Tim, the erstwhile silent, was whistling “The Campbells are Coming” in at least three keys.

As Evan always cheerfully predicts, things do adjust themselves, and this marriage is a distinct

gain to me. Martha in the kitchen was just a trifle oppressive. Martha in the cottage will prove a substantial guardian angel.

I said almost a year ago that if I was a servant, I should not care to live with but one of my friends, and perhaps not even in my own household. Now I have decided that I would do the latter, because I think that a masculine logic dominates here that might be worded, "Do not measure a servant's capacity for toil by your own necessities, but by the reverse order of things." And though we Americans may and do lack the staple comfort of hereditary service, we can do much for ourselves. As father says, the great knack in domestic service is to begin with good stock. Earn a reputation as a mistress, and the outgoing one will usually supply a "cousin" to succeed her. For this reputation I am striving in a comfortable, leisurely way. But I feel sure already that Effie will have a cook up her sleeve if Eliza and Bertle ever combine, which they doubtless will in time, as they have a melancholy streak in common which they seem greatly to enjoy.

*October* 19. A northeast storm following black frost. The garden is laid low almost a month earlier than last year. Only the red-gold wall

flowers, the last tenants in the bed of sweet odours, have withstood both chill and storm and given me a generous bouquet for the table, at once a greeting and a good-night. A greeting for the anniversary of our return, a good-night from the garden.

Evan stayed at home to-day so that it should be a festival for me, even if the storm howled, and he has drawn me a plan for developing, not altering, the wild garden, so that everything we add may be of account, while I have revised my seed and plant lists; and though there is fair-day garden work for a month yet, we cannot always have a November like the last. Now it is the sowing time in the book garden, which we intend more than ever to plant with perennials. Blessed gardens of flowers and of books! Is there any phase of a woman's life, either of joy or of sorrow, when you will not strengthen and comfort her?

A little before nightfall, as we were sitting in the ingle nook, half dreaming, half conversing without words, father came in hurriedly with a package, which he took to the study.

In a moment he crossed the hall and laid something upon the mantle-shelf under Linnæus's portrait, trusting to my curiosity to take it down.



"This is my gift to you, Barbara, the year's mind of the home-coming. Open it, my daughter. It is my treasure, and given for an heirloom."

I lifted down what seemed to be a carved wooden box with a metal fastening. On taking it to the light, I saw that it was an outer case with a broad silver clasp, and contained a book.

The book was Dodoens's "Herball," the volume of contention and introduction! The case of apple wood was made from the broken limb of the Mother Tree, a narrow border of violets was carved across top and bottom, while inserted on each side were two small ivory miniatures. On one cover, young mother—the miniature that father always kept in his desk—was beside that of himself; the reverse held those of Evan and myself, all three done without my knowledge. The clasp was engraved with this legend in Old English characters.

*"Blessed is she to whom it is given to link the  
new love with the old."*

"But after all, is there such a thing as old love? Is it not always young? Look!" said father, and following where his finger pointed through the splashed pane and across the pathway, we saw Tim going home with his milk pail in one hand and a chubby bunch of chrysanthemums in the other,

followed by The Orphan, who, unproved, carried his muddy feet into the cottage.

Martha stood at the door, and as Tim came under the porch, she took off his dripping coat, and stooping — kissed him!

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